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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

RECLAIMING EMPOWERMENT, AGENCY, AND COLLECTIVE HEALING (R.E.A.C.H.) FOR  
YOUTH: AN ADAPTATION OF EMOTIONAL EMANCIPATION CIRCLES FOR ADOLESCENT  
MALES OF AFRICAN ANCESTRY

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Psychology

by

Marlene Angela Garza

August, 2018

Daryl Rowe, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This clinical dissertation, written by

Marlene Angela Garza

Under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation identifies the relevant literature and methods that were used to develop a facilitator's handbook for a culturally-specific intervention for adolescent males of African ancestry. The handbook, *Reclaiming Empowerment, Agency, and Collective Healing for Youth* (R.E.A.C.H.-Youth) provides a curriculum for a culturally-centered and social justice-oriented group intervention for adolescent males of African ancestry. The resource developed will serve to provide empowerment and healing<sup>1</sup> for young adolescents who have experienced historical discrimination and the negative effects of racism and discrimination in the United States.

Adolescent young men of African ancestry are one of the many groups within the US that have experienced the negative effects of racism and oppression. Developing these small communities of healing are culturally congruent to African centered modalities of therapeutic treatment and designed to help these young people begin to create a sense of community within their peers. Included are the REACH Youth Handbook and Reader, and implications for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> "Healing" in this context refers to the need for youth of African ancestry to begin reconstructing their lives into one that embraces the value system of our ancestors rather than one of Western philosophies.



## **Introduction**

Race is a concept that was created to separate people into groups; to create a hierarchical ranking of groups based on their physical appearance; and to justify the dehumanization of, and discrimination against, other groups (Markus, 2008; Omi & Winant, 1994; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Racial formation is the subjective way of grouping people that has altered the way in which communities of color have experienced life in the United States and the way in which they have been discriminated against by the dominant culture (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009).

Tools of psychology and politics have historically made attempts to justify keeping persons of African ancestry in positions of inferiority (Smedley, 2006). Understanding racism and race relations in society and in the profession of psychology is oftentimes looked at in a two-dimensional framework, as a black and white phenomenon, rather than a multi-ethnic challenge (Chang & Diaz-Veizades, 1999). Struggling to maintain a cultural identity in Eurocentric academic environments continues to be a challenge for many people of color (Stone, Harrison & Mottley, 2012). Through the exploration of historical trauma and the treatment towards those who have indirectly and directly been affected by racism, bigotry, and violence, we can begin to understand how to heal members of these communities. Internalized racism, oppression, and hatred have a profound effect on how a person understands the world, which subsequently creates a hurdle to achieving equality (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Ford & Harris, 1996; Myhra, 2011). Culture permeates the conceptualization of a person. This cultural formulation in psychology must be a holistic consideration if clinicians seek to properly help members of communities of color (Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008; Gallardo, Parham, Trimble, & Yeh, 2012; Gone, 2010).

A culturally-centered and social justice-oriented group intervention for adolescent males of African ancestry was developed for this dissertation. The resource can serve to provide empowerment and healing for young adolescents who have experienced historical discrimination and the negative effects of racism in the United States. Adolescent men of African ancestry are one of the many groups within the US that have experienced the injustices of racism and oppression within a system based on power and privilege (Harrell, 2000).

Developing this collective healing resource is culturally congruent to African centered modalities of therapeutic treatment and designed to help these young people create a sense of community within their peers. Collectivism is culturally consistent and less stigmatizing as people of color historically are less likely to seek out mental health services or remain in treatment (Bernal & Saez-Santiago, 2006; Parks, 2003; Ridley, 2005). In addition, creating a space where young like-minded people of similar ancestry and experiences can express their feelings, discuss their worries, and feel connected to others, is in part a way in which the community can heal through developing a sense of agency within their life.

As a Chicana studying to become a psychologist for communities of color, the author has perpetually struggled with an internal battle of using therapeutic models and frameworks that have been developed, tested and analyzed on predominantly European American normative samples (Arnett, 2008). As a school counselor in an urban public high school, the author was witness to many attempts at acculturating youth of color with varied cultural beliefs and upbringing, into mainstream ways of thinking, educating and disciplining within the education system. Through reflective practice, every attempt to understand curriculum, therapeutic models, and assessment measures in both environments, is a study not only in understanding the content, but also in attempting to modify and apply it to the communities with whom she works.

## Adolescent Boys of African Ancestry

Children learn about the world through their caregivers, family members, and those in the village that raise them, with generations of children also raised by grandparents and great grandparents. The human trafficking<sup>2</sup> of African people throughout the United States in our very recent history, overt discrimination of Latino immigrants, unclaimed reparations of Japanese families forced into internment camps in the last century, and Native American genocide, are only some examples of the systematic oppression endured by people of color in the U.S. Members of each of these groups have survived with historical scars that are impossible to repair by simply expecting time to heal the wound. While forgotten in traditional American history books, this history has not been forgotten within families themselves (Eyerman, 2001).

Residual beliefs about human trafficking of persons of African ancestry continues to negatively affect Black males, whose life expectancy is 60 years, twenty years younger than White males (Toldson & Toldson, 2001). Marginalized communities have yet to begin the healing process from the trauma endured throughout the course of history and shared generationally. As a psychosocial stressor, historical trauma serves as a *pathogenic mechanism* affecting the body systems (Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2004; Gone, 2010; Sotero, 2006; Toldson & Toldson, 2001). Before understanding the effects of human trafficking on people of African ancestry<sup>3</sup>, it can become easy to pathologize the accumulated effects of historical trauma.

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<sup>2</sup> The term human trafficking will be used in lieu of the term slavery as a means to give responsibility to the perpetrators' actions and purpose.

<sup>3</sup> While the literature uses the terms "African American", "Black," and African ancestry interchangeably, the term African ancestry will be used as it provides not only an indigenous framework, but also a way to identify all individuals dispersed throughout the world during the history of human trafficking of African people.

Throughout the history of the study of psychology, those of African ancestry have been over-diagnosed with serious and untreatable mental illnesses due to the color of their skin (Davis & Stevenson, 2006). Rather than diagnosing individuals with anxiety, depression, or having any understanding of historical trauma and racial discrimination, mental health professionals diagnosed blacks with schizophrenia and conduct disorders (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & L'Heureux Lewis, 2006) and failed to consider the psychological implications of discrimination.

For children, there is a dichotomous relationship between growing up in a culturally diverse environment and witnessing racism towards self and others (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). One could argue that we live in a society where all are treated “equal” and that the color of one’s skin should not matter, but research demonstrates that Blacks continue to endure perpetual microaggressions that include racial slurs, put-downs, and implicit comments (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Harrell, 2000; Sue et al., 2007). Nonetheless, such situations can elicit dialogue about race for young people in the classroom (Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009).

The responsibility of the community to raise the village children can be a critical component, but it continues to be maintained that families and caretakers are the primary role models. When the family system is disrupted, the child’s emotional and psychological development can also become disrupted (Dyce, 2014). Families and caretakers that take a proactive role in socializing children to be proud of their cultural identity and raise children with better coping strategies to buffer the effects of ecological racial discrimination (Belgrave, Nguyen, Johnson, & Hood, 2011; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2010). Evidence demonstrates that supporting youth in developing a strong cultural identity can become a shield against external racial discrimination.

Parenting and mentoring children to become empowered in an environment with low expectations of success and surrounding systems of oppression is one step of the process of rehabilitating an entire community (Travis & Leech, 2014). The next step is for the community to reconstruct and rehabilitate young people to believe that they are equal to everyone else, to heal from the historical trauma, and to perform better in all aspects of life than the previous generation. The healing begins with grassroots and indigenous collectivism, not traditional Western individualistic approaches (Grills, Aird, & Rowe, 2016; Parks, 2003).

## **Literature Review**

Young men of color continue to be constrained with social policies that have disproportionately affected their future success in education, housing, employment, and civil rights (Alexander, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Currently, black men have been incarcerated at 6.6 times the rate of White men and nearly one in 10 men of African ancestry have been incarcerated at least one time in their lifetime (Department of Justice, 2012). Moreover, the recent investigation of the Ferguson Police Department, after the killing of an unarmed young man of African ancestry, Michael Brown, exposed that Ferguson police used force on 90% of encounters with African Americans (Civil Rights Division, 2014). If these were not enough, evidence within the education system leads to major discrepancies for young black men who are graduating from high school at a 59% rate, nearly 20% lower than Whites (Schott: Foundation for Public Education, 2015). Most recently, studies have demonstrated that school teachers have exhibited implicit bias towards young black boys at rates exponentially higher than their White counterparts (Gilliam, Maupin, & Accavitti, 2016).

The U.S. continues to be witness to residual effects of human trafficking and historical trauma through the devaluation of human lives in recent history, namely rates of deaths, incarcerations, and limited high school graduation of young persons of African ancestry (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). These lasting consequences continue to be argued and researched by disciplines such as sociology and criminal justice, displaying a negative correlation between human trafficking in 1840 and the prevalence of black owned businesses (Wilkins, Whiting, Watson, Russon, & Moncrief, 2012). The Middle Passage marks the time where Africans were transported in chains in the bowels of ships to the U.S. to be sold.

Knowing the historical context for *why* a person of African ancestry is in the U.S. can have a profound effect on the psychological functioning of an entire culture (Wilkins et al., 2012).

Historical trauma describes past injustices dealt to many cultures in the United States and can be defined in text books and by research experts as the long term, mass trauma (colonialism, slavery, war, genocide) to which populations have historically been subjected (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Gone, 2008; Goodkind, Hess, Gorman, & Parker, 2012; McKnight, 2004; Sotero, 2006). It is well documented that human trafficking and historical trauma continue to plague the community of African ancestry through political research (Richardson, Johnson, & St. Vil, 2014), sociological data (Constantine, & Blackmon, 2002; Fisher et al., 2000), psychological findings (Adams, Dobles, Gómez, Kurtiş, & Molina, 2015), and educational results (Sue et al., 2009).

Most research on the residual effects of trauma fails to discuss the effects of race-based trauma or the effects of internalized racism (Carter, 2007). What is also missing from the healing of trauma is the historical context of which these communities have struggled (Duran et al., 2008). Furthermore, despite growing interest in multicultural issues in the field of psychology, literature on culturally specific interventions for those of African ancestry continues to be insufficient. Most culturally specific psychological services still focus on the individual, while the group model is culturally consistent with the experiences of persons of African ancestry and community-centered cultural values (Utsey, Giesbrecht, Hook, & Sanard, 2008).

While we understand that there are many ways in which communities of color have struggled, we also understand the ways in which the communities can heal. Persons of African ancestry are more likely to succeed when they are surrounded by culturally relevant resources and when they are supported by caretakers and role models who encourage youth to develop and

maintain a strong cultural identity (Davis & Stevenson, 2006, Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008, Syed & Juang, 2014). Evidence based African centered practices for community programs and mental health services are known to be the most beneficial for persons of African ancestry (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Travis & Leech, 2014).

With psychology increasingly becoming integrated as a collaborative and holistic approach in health settings, it becomes more critical to understand the complex histories of people. Evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that the more a person is aligned with his or her cultural disposition, the higher the likelihood they are living a life liberated of mental debilitations (Parham, 2012). The implications for treatment and healing is critical for mental health professionals as the theoretical framework of most mainstream schools of thought have served as disadvantageous to communities of color, especially those of African ancestry (Adams et al., 2015; Holliday, 2009; Tinsely-Jones, 2001).

Our memory is based on how we see the world, how the world is expressed to us, and how others share their world with us. Neurologically, the brain responds to experiences by altering the synapses to recreate a perspective of the events and encode it into memory (Siegel, 2001). With the prejudicial perspectives and acts towards them and their family, the world becomes an unsafe place for many communities of color (Yehuda, Halligan & Grossman, 2001) Racism and discrimination is encoded as racial mistrust, culturally marginalized identities, and stereotype threat, of children of African ancestry (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002). When threat to identity becomes the only way that a child sees the world, this belief can manifest as internalized oppression and self-hatred (Pyke, 2010; Rowe & Aird, 2014). Parents can buffer the external socialization experience by promoting a strong sense of positive racial identity to explore, promote and share with their children. Parents of young men of African



ancestry must also help their sons develop a critical self-concept around topics of race and racism (Thomas et al., 2010). Families that take a proactive role in socializing their children to be proud of their cultural identity and race, raise children with better coping strategies who can buffer the ecological racial discrimination (Belgrave et al., 2011).

Youth of African ancestry are marginalized in the school system and experience negative interactions with those who assert to be educating them inclusive of harsher punishments (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008) and prophetic to later life experiences (Allison et al., 1999). Especially significant are the challenges faced by young men who, without proper intervention through education and support from family and community, develop poor self-perception, low self-esteem, and depression (Allison et al., 1999; Davis & Stevenson, 2006). Continuing the same path puts these young boys not only at risk for incarceration but for physical health problems such as hypertension and diabetes (Toldson & Toldson, 2001). Cultural intervention and education is a critical component for young people to minimize the effects of historical trauma and discrimination.

It has been well researched that African American youth have been devalued in the dominant culture and continue to battle with racial stereotypes, ultimately finding difficulty in creating a strong individual identity (Phinney, 1990; Phinney 1992). Additionally, it has also been theorized that developing culturally responsive education would be beneficial for identity development in youth despite minimal research having been published to demonstrate the efficacy of this theory. One exploratory program found difficulty in returning overwhelming positive results on their emancipatory education program (Lewis et al., 2012).

Adolescence is a poignant time for all teenagers and young Black males must also deal with the overarching stressor of racial discrimination that colors their entire life palette. Higher

achieving African American males are more aware of racial discrimination within the education system (Caldwell et al., 2004) and oftentimes can cope more successfully than those with fewer resources. Factors that aid an individual in positive coping include developing a positive racial identity. Evidence demonstrates that assisting youth in developing a strong cultural identity and commitment to the community can become a shield against the external racial discrimination (Akinyela, 2005; Caldwell et al., 2004; Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012) and helping youth see the value in their contribution to the community (Watts-Jones, Ali, Alfaro, & Frederick, 2007). Teaching young African-Americans a healthy distrust of non-blacks has also proven to help individuals cope with many of the daily racial discriminatory acts (Constantine, & Blackmon, 2002). Personal efficacy and engagement to community and to themselves is also critical for positive development in young people of color to develop agency within the community (Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012; Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Power within society is an overarching idea that describes human functioning. The differences in power between marginalized communities and the dominant culture is well documented and can most certainly affect how people interact within academic, social, and interpersonal settings (Pinderhughes, 2010). While empowerment theory is implicated at multiple levels (Peterson, Hamme, & Speer, 2002), it is important to emphasize that the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group is focused on collective healing. Furthermore, helping young men develop a sense of empowerment within their community and amongst the dominant Euro-centered education system and society, can enhance their learning and sense of agency in a place where most young men of color feel powerless to improve their situations (Dalrymple & Burke, 2006).

According to Tillman (2006), there are five dimensions in which researchers and mental health professionals can learn to become sensitive to African American realities. These include (a) using culturally sensitive methods, (b) using culturally specific knowledge that captures a lived identity, (c) therapists having cultural resistance to theoretical dominance, (d) interpreting data in a culturally sensitive way, and (e) using culturally informed theory and practice. When these dimensions are considered as a basis for understanding the struggle of developing an African American identity, the retention of culture within a healing framework is meaningful. Elements of Liberation Psychology, Fanonian Psychology, and African Centered Psychology, can also be used to actively understand the psychology of the oppressed and impoverished communities by conceptually and practically addressing the repressive sociopolitical structure in which they exist.

Methods by which healing professionals can use these techniques begin with understanding the basic principles of African-centered values (interdependence, collectivism, transformation, and spirituality) into practices that help persons of African ancestry heal. These tenets are meant to help individuals find balance and harmony within a collaborative energy that orients with a natural order (Gilbert, Harvey, & Belgrave, 2009). Before mental health professionals can begin to effectively help heal, it is critical to recognize the realities of the people with which they work. The goal is to restore “beingness” to the individual, not to seek allegiance towards a physical place, but to embrace an identity and liberate the spirit (Nobles, 2013). Framing the approach from an understanding of a person’s “belonging”, “being” and “becoming” places the person within the context of a culture where one could establish a baseline. Without a culturally appropriate baseline with which to work, a persons’ behaviors and perspective could be (and have historically been) considered pathological.

Using African-Centered modalities delineates the explicit need to prioritize African values and ideals when working with persons of African ancestry and cultural identification (Asante, 1987, 1990). This paradigm shift can begin to reformulate how people reason and what concepts and ideas are shared with the community (Adams et al., 2015). It becomes critical to acknowledge what persons of African ancestry know as truths, which begin with the cultural collectivistic values (Akinyela, 2005). The stories, the culture, and spiritual practices and traditions were passed down to children with the expectation that the traditions would live on with the children in the community (Holliday, 2009).

An African-centered approach, through any of the above methodologies, is not simply about following a specific curriculum set out for therapists. The therapeutic relationship is negotiated between two human beings, one of which deserves the agency to determine who will help them through the process of healing and liberation (Gregory & Harper, 2001; Jamison, 2010; Kwate, 2005; Phillips, 1990). Contrary to western approaches, the therapeutic relationship begins with authenticity and oftentimes “self-disclosure” with the client. For many long-established practicing therapists, this can stand in contrast to the traditional training, and therefore may pose as a challenge (Phillips, 1990; Tinsely-Jones, 2001).

Group work, mentoring, and supporting young men of color must begin with the helping adults first understanding the significant impact of intergenerational trauma in the life of the young person as the remnants of the trauma are often ingrained in the everyday lives of the next generation (Goodkind et al., 2012). Helping these young people heal begins by recognizing their trauma before they do, acknowledging it, and actively taking part in the healing process. This approach is in direct contrast to western European approach to mental health, mentoring, and healing. Using a collectivistic approach, developing a co-intentional relationship and

remembering that the helping professional is modeling, mentoring, teaching, and learning from the adolescent is critical in a culturally integrated and relevant approach to treatment (Gilbert et al., 2009; McMahon & Watts, 2002; Toldson & Toldson, 2001).

## **Handbook Development**

This chapter outlines the procedures that were used to develop the R.E.A.C.H. Youth Facilitator's Handbook and Reader. A review of the literature, consultation with experts in the field of multicultural psychology, and collaboration with community members, all have influenced the development of this resource. The Applied Scholarship lab played an integral part in the development of the manual by ensuring that each component of the document maintained relevance to the community for which it was being developed. Creating the handbook demonstrated in part, a similar journey that the R.E.A.C.H. youth group members are proposed to take-an exploration of the self and their relation to the community. The literature review provided context related to the historical and intergenerational trauma experienced by persons of African ancestry, African-centered healing considerations, and alternative theoretical models specifically focused for the community.

### **Rationale for Creating the R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group**

The R.E.A.C.H. Youth group handbook is part of a grassroots social justice initiative, and an adaptation of the Emotional Emancipation Circles<sup>SM</sup> Handbook (EECs<sup>SM</sup>: The Association of Black Psychologists and Community Healing Network, Inc., 2016), designed to help adults of African ancestry heal from historical trauma, systemic and internalized oppression, as well as engage in the fight for equality. The EECs<sup>SM</sup> were developed to afford Black people with a safe space to work together to combat the lie of Black inferiority and assert the truth of Black humanity (Grills, Rowe, & Aird, 2016).

The R.E.A.C.H. Youth group is culturally grounded and research-based, structured to support personal growth and emotional empowerment. Through the lens of social justice and social action, the goals of the group include expanding cultural consciousness and fostering a

sense of power in a community that has historically been disenfranchised. The structure of the group includes a safe space to critically discuss and consider unhealthy misperceptions and behaviors, including internalized messages that fuel a Black inferiority fiction. The group works through ground rules, themes-called “Keys” (Piper-Mandy & Rowe, 2010), and action-oriented steps, with enough flexibility to adapt to the group participants.

Additionally, by integrating historical context into contemporary themes specifically for adolescents, it is the hope that these young men begin to claim the power to define their own reality. This will ultimately improve academic performance, steadily increase graduation rates, and continue to build cohesion within the Black community.

### **General Procedure**

First, emancipatory education programs were reviewed to understand the rationale, results, and recommendations for future programs which include strategies outlined below. In addition, a thorough evaluation of the EEC handbook for adults was needed to consider how the activities and conversations could be adapted for teenagers. Both comprehensive reviews informed the development of the handbook and primer, which is informed by and consistent with the development of emotional emancipation, empowerment, and social-justice group for young men of African ancestry.

### **Literature Review and Analysis Procedures**

**Identification of source material and study selection.** The R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Facilitators Handbook has been developed through the implementation of available literature on adolescents of African ancestry, from the fields of psychology, education, counseling, sociology, history, social work, and popular culture. The group handbook is not considered a traditional therapy process-related manual and the groups are not intended to be process-therapy groups.

However, weekly themes and activities are influenced by the literature related to counseling persons of African ancestry and mentoring young men to address concerns that may arise during the facilitation of the groups. Specifically, emancipatory education programs and African-centered groups and activities were analyzed and results considered to understand how to proceed with the adaptation of the EEC's for young men. In addition to reviewing the literature for the EEC's, additional research was considered on historical and intergenerational trauma, liberation psychology, and other empowerment-type groups which informed topics and interventions included in the handbook. Finally, community stakeholders were consulted for input on socially relevant and culturally appropriate digital media for the activities for each week.

**Search strategies.** Online research databases such as PsychInfo, PubMed, Google Scholar, and EBSCOHost were used in the search of literature for the proposed dissertation topic. The listed databases provided experimental, correlational, quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical studies on topics presented. In this review, peer-review articles were searched related to African-centered emancipatory learning, empowerment groups, and social justice programs in the United States. Scholarly books were reviewed for historical context on race and race relations in the U.S. Further information was found through national research initiatives on education, incarceration, and police brutality.

To facilitate an organized review of the literature, combinations of the following key words were input into online literature databases: *African, African-American, African-centered, adolescents, mental-illness, empowerment, collective, healing, biases, teenagers, males, effects, activism, implicit, internalized, mental health, therapy, oppression, racism, stereotypes, self-consciousness, ethnicity, development, identity, reclaiming, ancestral, emancipatory, learning,*



*police, punishment, incarceration, religion, indigenous, oppression, family, community, outreach, urban, organizing, school, proverbs, family, parenting, and mentoring.*

**Impact of the Applied Scholarship Community (ASC).** The Applied Scholarship Community (ASC) lab, chaired by Dr. Daryl Rowe, Ph.D. fostered a creative and collaborative space for critical discourse to interrogate the traditional western theories, practices, and methodologies in the field of psychology. By working in our ASC lab, we fostered agency through creating a shared safe space to receive feedback and were held accountable for critical thinking, social justice and empowerment-oriented work. The interventions for both group handbooks developed in this ASC focused on creating a sense of community, belongingness, and agency that promotes active community engagement. This process runs parallel to the process of developing the handbooks for both the Asian American/Pacific Islander college-aged women and adolescent males of African ancestry. Finally, the intention of the group interventions is to take a strengths-based, grass roots approach that considers the multifaceted contexts of each participant, rather than taking a traditionally psychopathological, western approach that emphasizes an individualistic and deficit-driven framework.

**Media and technology.** Both empowerment groups developed activities that heavily integrate technology and social media platforms (e.g. polleverywhere.com, implicit.harvard.edu, and YouTube.com) to augment participant interaction and engagement amongst adolescents and young adults. Facilitators in both groups are encouraged to creatively augment activities using social media content to elicit meaningful discussion in each group. The combined use of technology and social media within a weekly empowerment dialogue serves to make the collaborative space more meaningful and applicable to an increasingly technological and media-driven generation.

**Development of the handbook content.** The purpose of the extensive review and search of relevant activities was for the development of a facilitators handbook that would provide a culturally-congruent program for emancipatory learning, liberation from identity misperceptions, social justice, and empowerment. The content of each theme, activity, and conversation topic was informed by existing knowledge and research of the above topics within the U.S. inclusive of cultural considerations for young men of African ancestry that help to explain the experience of young Black men in the U.S. In addition, the handbook was informed by and adapted from the existing EEC handbook (The Association of Black Psychologists and Community Healing Network, 2016).

### **Description of Handbook and Primer**

The R.E.A.C.H. Youth facilitator's handbook reflects a 10-week group adapted from the Emotional Emancipation Circles developed by the Community Healing Network in collaboration with the Association for Black Psychologists (The Association of Black Psychologists and Community Healing Network, Inc., 2016). Every R.E.A.C.H.-Youth group meeting has five components. The average length of each session should be approximately 60 minutes, with a strong consideration of the audience for explicitly how long each session, and activities within, should last.

1. Check-In: This provides a short amount of time for each member to be present with the group and to acknowledge what energy they bring to the day's topics.
2. Introduction to EEC<sup>SM</sup> topic and Key: Each theme has been adapted for use with young men and emancipatory learning with strong roots in African teachings. Themes and keys are discussed more fully below.
3. Activity: Several activities relevant to the theme or key for the week will be presented to the group. The activities include discussion of contemporary quotes, conversations about spoken word, movie clips, song lyrics, or online questionnaires.
4. Process-discuss activity: After completion of the activity, the group will have the opportunity to discuss the relevance of the activity to their everyday life and their community. Participants are encouraged to apply themes to their life
5. Mindfulness exercise: Mindfulness and meditation in each group meeting provides a space for the young men to bring awareness to the physiological effects of stress on the body. It also allows each person to pay more close attention to how we choose to live our lives. More on the importance of incorporating mindfulness is discussed below.

The first few sessions of the R.E.A.C.H.-Youth groups lay the foundation for the group and can influence the level of participation for the group in future meetings. It is important to set the right tone with the young folks and remember that all components of the few initial circles are designed to foster a community of people who feel safe sharing with others and inspired to participate in a group of their peers. It is a developmental journey that is salient for participating youth with limited resources to help to discover important components of their identity. Fellow members will become more conscious and begin to feel and embrace a heightened love of themselves and love for the community and peers. This awareness results in consciously choosing behaviors and decisions that reflects a youth's sense of worth and purpose as an individual and as a member of their community. This enlightenment simultaneously stimulates a desire to share with others the freedom that comes with emancipation from the lie of Black inferiority.

Emotional emancipation argues that we learn the lessons from our collective history and use our cultural principles to restore the basic foundations for each of us to become stronger, and develop a healthier, safer, and more caring Black community. The lessons we want to develop within this group include: daily practice of respect for self and one another, having more patience and perseverance, taking responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and the good of others in the community, and recognizing interdependence and using cooperation, self-discipline, sacrifice, and unconditional love as our first response to how we treat others will foster strong families, strong communities, and a strong people. These values embody a strength-based perspective of and understanding of themselves as a person within the community and to recognize a community responsibility. Each week also has activities and discussions involving themes/Keys, quotes and proverbs, and mindfulness.

## **Themes/Keys**

Adapted for a younger generation are the themes developed, called “Keys” (Piper-Mandy & Rowe, 2010; The Association of Black Psychologists and Community Healing Network, Inc., 2016) which provide the community reminders of what is important to share and teach to the younger generations methods of liberation. These keys can serve as support in moments of stress, challenge, strain, and whenever youth are at risk to returning to old habits and unhelpful patterns of thinking. The core cultural principles of the R.E.A.C.H. Youth are adapted from the EEC<sup>SM</sup> (Grills, Rowe, et al., 2016) and include: truth, justice, respect, harmony, balance, reciprocity, and order. The facilitator has the task of engaging youth in the group so as they look forward to the next group. Except for the first two and last group meetings, the facilitator’s responsibility is to share a “key” in every session and explain how to apply key in each person’s life.

## **Quotes and Proverbs**

“A wise child is talked to in proverbs” –Asante

For many cultures, proverbs and metaphors are used as important messages passed down from ancestors or elders that help us make sense of our environment. African culture specifically is rich in religious and spiritual traditions that can often be ignored in traditional mental health populations (Frame & Williams, 1996). We can better understand the contemporary community and the African ancestral teachings through proverbs and metaphors and in turn, we can help youth feel more connected to the larger cultural community (Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006). It is culturally normative to use metaphors or quotes to convey meaningful themes situated in a broad metaphorical schema (Brown, 2004). For youth, it can be difficult to piece together themes without providing guidance by the way of quotes or metaphors that are better relatable.

Using the quotes as a check-in can give group members the opportunity to situate within the theme. Each week, there will be a set of quotes to begin the conversations.

### **Mindfulness and Meditation**

The teenage years can be stressful. Couple the typical teenage stress with the everyday racism endured by young Black men, it can be no wonder why many more young men of color develop unhealthy stress levels than their White counterparts (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Carter, 2007; Magnus, Cowen, Wyman, Fagen, & Work, 1999; Sellers et al., 2006; Utsey et al., 2008). Anytime someone experiences excessive amounts of stress, people tend to get “stuck” in their thoughts. Mindfulness can be a remedy to avoiding an emotional experience brought on by daily stressors (Fuchs, Lee, Roemer, & Orsillo, 2013). Each R.E.A.C.H. Youth group session will incorporate mindfulness as a foundational component as a method to help each young person pay more close attention to how we live our daily life. It can bring an awareness to the physiological effects of stress on the body, in our heart, lungs muscles, and stomach.

## **Discussion**

### **Indications for Use**

The R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Facilitators Handbook was adapted and designed specifically for adolescent males of African ancestry. The purpose of this handbook is to create culturally-grounded and social justice-oriented group interventions for adolescent males of African ancestry. The primary goal of this handbook development is to provide a resource for mental health professionals and/or community-based organizations that can be used to promote empowerment, liberation, well-being, and social justice among a marginalized population within the United States. The creation of these groups provides a space where young Black men can develop a community of like-minded and culturally similar peers where they can share concerns, fears, and joys. In addition, conversations will allow youth to have a collective space to participate in conversations related to the implicit and explicit perception of Black inferiority (Grills, Aird, et al., 2016).

The handbook contains curriculum for 10-weeks of group meetings inclusive of several activities, each session of approximately one-hour in length to accommodate the traditional school class time. Group meetings could be held after school, partly during lunch, during homeroom, or in between two classes, to minimize the disruptions during the day. The R.E.A.C.H. Youth group content provides an alternative to individualistic learning promoted by most western institutions of learning and mental health. Developing these small communities of healing is culturally congruent to the African centered modalities of therapeutic treatment and designed to help these young people develop a strong and critical sense of community within their peers. It is also the intention that facilitators also become integrated into the dialogue by

actively participating and providing a safe space for discussion as well as support and guidance within the community.

### **Clinical Implications**

There exists a small body of literature on the creation and implementation of empowerment groups and emancipatory education (Potts, 2003; Ratteray, 1992). However, the results of these programs are inconsistent. Recommendations from completed programs encourage others to consider disentangling race and culture as well as explore how each of these components affects identity as each may affect the outcome of the group (Lewis et al, 2012). Also, rites of passage ceremonies for the African American community have demonstrated efficacy in providing an environment where youth have a space to develop cultural awareness, racial identity strength, and increase community involvement (Harvey & Hill, 2004; Warfield-Coppock, 1992).

The small body of related literature includes results of emancipatory schooling which indicate that graduates of the programs grounded in African folk beliefs had higher GPA's, higher standardized test scores, and earned honors accolades more often compared to the general student body (Potts, 2003). Additional studies have indicated positive relationships with these schools because of their family-like school climate, relationships with teachers and affirmation of African culture in the school (Ratteray, 1992). In one experiential learning activity considering African-Centered emancipatory intervention in a middle school class during the school day resulted in a decrease in their overall ethnic identification and there appeared to be difficulties between disentangling ethnic identity and racial identity (Lewis et al., 2012).

The R.E.A.C.H. Youth group involves a collaborative, yet semi-structured process, in which the group leader will organize each group meeting by providing psycho-education and



examples of the topic for the week. Group members will contribute their own ideas, emotions, experiences, and opinions to the group. The leader will serve to model openness and point out process issues as they come up to maintain safety in the group and increase group cohesiveness. Additionally, the groups will also involve engagement with the physical, intuitive, emotional, cognitive, creative, and spiritual realms to create a more holistic approach to self-discovery and identity formation.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

This handbook was specifically adapted and designed for use with young men of African ancestry based on the work previously developed by the Community Healing Network in collaboration with the Association of Black Psychologists (The Association of Black Psychologists and Community Healing Network, Inc., 2016). The development of activities and topics for discussion were selected as culturally responsive and identified based on the current social trends. It would be beneficial for future facilitators to consider music or short films that are relevant to the themes and will hold meaning for the group participants while also maintaining the critical ties to the cultural history. By integrating rites of passage-type activities with contemporary and relevant programming, the young men will develop stronger connections with their history and their cultural identity.

Also, parents must consent to have their child participate in the program. Consent forms, curriculum outlines, and other pertinent program information available for review are critical to allow the parents to know what their child is participating in. If the child lacks family support, having forms completed or encouragement to participate may be an added barrier to successful participation in the program. One could hold a parent meeting to review the material, explain the process and goals of the group, and to answer questions that parents may have. Including

community leaders or extended family can help stakeholders understand the importance of young men participating in this program and reinforce the concept of the community responsibility of caring for children.

The intention for this dissertation was to conduct a critical literature review to construct and develop a culturally-specific group intervention and adaptation of the EEC handbook for adolescent males of African ancestry. The handbook or activities have yet to be implemented or evaluated. Future evaluators should consider submitting this handbook for approval through the Institutional Review Board and develop methods for a program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of interventions developed in this handbook. In addition, it would benefit the future improvement of the handbook to consider focus groups that can help to identify salient topics that can be further explored in later editions of this handbook. Additional considerations for evaluation can be the academic pursuits of participants, development of relationships within the group members and with community members, and increased leadership within the community.

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## APPENDIX A

Extended Review of the Literature (R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Reader)



## **R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group READER**

### **What is Emotional Emancipation and Empowerment?**

Empowerment can be defined as a process of increasing awareness and developing agency in personal, interpersonal, and political arenas and has roots in multiple disciplines. Oftentimes, this word is used within the context of understanding power differentials. Power within society is an overarching idea that describes human functioning. The differences in power between marginalized communities and the dominant culture is well documented and can most certainly affect how people interact within academic, social, and personal settings (Pinderhughes, 2010). While empowerment theory is implicated at multiple levels (Peterson, Hamme, & Speer, 2002), it is important to emphasize that the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group is focused on collective healing in addition to individual healing.

It has been well researched that African American youth have been devalued in the dominant culture and continue to battle with racial stereotypes, ultimately finding difficulty in creating a strong individual identity (Phinney, 1990; Thomas, Speight & Witherspoon, 2010). It has often been theorized that developing culturally responsive education would be beneficial for identity development in youth. While minimal research has been published to demonstrate the efficacy of this theory, one exploratory program found difficulty in disentangling ethnic and racial identity which in turn affected their ability to return positive results on their exploratory emancipatory education program (Lewis, et al., 2012).

By integrating both identity development and rites of passage-type activities, it is the goal that young men in the R.E.A.C.H. youth group will develop stronger ties towards their cultural identity. With these strength-based approaches, young men of color can develop an appropriate

level of socialization in a community that values the principles and strength of the Black community (Grills, Rowe & Aird, 2016).

Furthermore, helping young men develop a sense of empowerment within their community and amongst the dominant Euro-centered education system and society, can enhance their learning and sense of agency in a place where most young men of color feel powerless to improve their situations (Dalrymple & Burke, 2006). This has been an ongoing battle since 1853:

A heavy and cruel hand has been laid upon us. As a people, we feel ourselves to be not only deeply injured, but grossly misunderstood. Our white countrymen do not know us. They are strangers to our character, ignorant of our capacity, oblivious to our history and progress, and are misinformed as to the principles and ideas that control and guide us, as a people. The great mass of American citizens estimates us as being a characterless and purposeless people; and hence we hold up our heads, if at all, against the withering influence of a nation's scorn and contempt.

*—Frederick Douglass, in a statement on behalf of delegates to the National Colored Convention held in Rochester, New York, in July 1853 (as cited in Plante (Ed.), 2015, pp.214)*

There exists a small body of literature on the creation and implementation of empowerment groups and emancipatory education (Potts, 2003; Ratteray, 1992). However, the results of these programs are inconsistent. Recommendations from completed programs encourage others to consider understanding culture versus race identity and how each may affect the outcome of the group (Lewis et al., 2012). Also, rites of passage ceremonies for the African American community have demonstrated efficacy in providing an environment where youth

have a space to develop cultural awareness, racial identity strength, and increase community involvement (Harvey & Hill., 2004; Warfield-Coppock, 1992).

Within the small body of literature includes emancipatory schooling results which indicate that graduates of these programs had higher GPA's, higher standardized test scores, and earned honors more often compared to the general student body (Potts, 2003). Additional studies have indicated positive relationships with these schools because of their family-like school climate, relationships with teachers and affirmation of African culture in the school (Ratteray, 1992). In one experiential learning activity considering African-Centered Emancipatory Intervention in a middle school class during the school day resulted in a decrease in their overall ethnic identification and there appeared to be difficulties between disentangling ethnic identity and racial identity (Lewis et al., 2012).

Furthermore, it could be argued that this handbook should disaggregate and focus on one subgroup within persons of African ancestry. The reality is that all individuals in the U.S. have been socialized to see people based on a phenotype, regardless of common interests, cultural traditions, or language (Omi & Winant 1994). Thus, when individuals experience oppression, prejudice, and microaggressions, it is done under the assumption that people of color continue to be considered as inferior to people of European ancestry. While previous studies have discussed the importance of clearly delineating between race identity and cultural identity (Potts, 2003), the purpose of this group is to help young men explore what identity means to them.

### **Why Identity Development?**

Children learn about the world through their caregivers, family members, and those in the community that raise them, with generations of children raised by grandparents and great

grandparents. The human trafficking<sup>4</sup> of African people throughout the United States in our very recent history, overt discrimination of Latino immigrants, unclaimed reparations of Japanese families forced into internment camps in the last century, and Native American genocide are only some examples of the systematic oppression endured by people of color in the U.S. Members of each of these groups have survived with historical scars that are impossible to repair by simply expecting time to heal the wound. While forgotten in traditional American history books, this history has not been forgotten within families themselves (Brave Heart, 1999; Danzer, 2012; Eyerman, 2001).

To initially deem some societal groups as inferior to others and assert power over them, the concept of *race* was created. People have been led to believe that race is an aspect of biology, an innate trait that can determine such qualities as a person's level of intelligence and degree of humanness. Race, therefore, is a concept that was created to separate people into groups; to create a hierarchical ranking of groups based on their physical appearance; and to justify the dehumanization of, and discrimination against, other groups (Omi & Winant, 1994; Smedley & Smedley, 2005; Markus, 2008). Omi & Winant (1994) state that racial formations are based on a historical process in which people are organized. It is this subjective way of grouping people that has altered the way in which communities of color have experienced the United States and the way in which they have been discriminated against by the dominant culture (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009).

Tools of psychology and politics historically have attempted to justify keeping persons of African ancestry in positions of inferiority (Rowe & Aird, 2014; Smedley, 2008). Understanding racism and race relations in society and in the profession of psychology is oftentimes looked at in

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<sup>4</sup> The term human trafficking will be used in lieu of the term slavery to give responsibility to the perpetrators' actions and purpose.

a two-dimensional framework, as a black and white phenomenon, rather than a multi-dimensional challenge (Chang & Diaz-Veizades, 1999). Struggling to maintain a cultural identity in Eurocentric academic environments continues to be a challenge for many people of color (Harrell, 2000), especially in higher education (Stone, Harrison, & Mottley, 2012). Through the exploration of historical trauma and the treatment towards those who have indirectly and directly been affected by racism, bigotry, and violence, we can begin to understand how to heal members of these communities (Brave Heart, 1999). Culture permeates the conceptualization of a person and that cultural formulation in psychology must be a holistic consideration if clinicians seek to properly help members of communities of color (Duran, Firehammer & Gonzalez, 2008; Gallardo, Parham, Trimble, & Yeh, 2012; Gone, 2010).

For children, there is a dichotomous relationship between growing up in a culturally diverse environment and witnessing racism towards self and others (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). One could argue that we live in a society where all are treated “equal” and that the color of one’s skin should not matter, but research demonstrates that Blacks continue to endure perpetual microaggressions that include racial slurs, put-downs, and implicit comments like speaking “well” (Sue et al., 2007). Socialization also begins within the educational system where part of a child’s identity begins to develop, and academic success or challenges begin. It has even been well documented that White teachers frequently treat students differently depending on their gender, race and assumed academic abilities (Good & Nickols, 2001) and further confirmed by a recent study on preschool teachers (Gilliam, Maupin, & Accavitti, 2016). These microaggressions can elicit dialogues about race for young people in the classroom (Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009).

While these young people struggle to be treated fairly in their academic pursuits, available support services become minimal, leaving students and families limited opportunities for support outlets. People of color are less likely to have access to critical mental health resources and they are also less likely to use such resources compared to Whites (C. Brown, 2003; Neighbors, 1988; Sussman, Robins, & Earls, 1987; Awosan et al., 2011, as cited in Wilkins, Whiting, Watson, Russon, & Moncrief, 2012. p. 15). This can be the result of the evidence demonstrating that mental health services can negate the effects of historical trauma endured by persons of African ancestry (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Carter, 2007). Those who experience racial discrimination also experience somatic symptoms more frequently to include headaches, stomach pains, poor appetite, and other physical complaints (Huynh & Fuligini, 2010).

Moreover, when services are used, well-intentioned actions and treatment modalities of mental health professionals can be the products of a larger paradigm of political, religious, and social systems that have historically oppressed people of color for centuries (Duran et al., 2008). In addition, in comparison to Whites, clients of African ancestry that choose to engage in mental health treatment tend to receive help from junior professionals as well as receive more low-cost treatment, with medication being prescribed more often than intensive psychotherapy (Pinderhughes, 1997; Ridley, 2005).

Studies on ethnic identity suggest that those with a greater sense of identity and global self-worth leads to better coping strategies (McMahon & Watts, 2002; Phinney, 1992). The importance of developing and integrating the individual and collective identity for youth become critical for building a strong young Black man. Theorists suggest that those young men who

develop a strong ethnic identity are better protected from internalized racism and self-hatred (Rowe & Aird, 2014).

### **Historical Moments and Movements**

Residual beliefs about human trafficking of persons of African ancestry continues to negatively affect black males, whose life expectancy is 60 years, twenty years younger than their white male counterparts (Toldson & Toldson, 2001). Marginalized communities have yet to begin the healing process from the trauma endured throughout the course of history and passed down through generations. As a psychosocial stressor, historical trauma can act as a “pathogenic mechanism” affecting the body systems (Sotero, 2006; Gone, 2010; Toldson & Toldson, 2001; (Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2004). Without understanding the effects of human trafficking on people of African ancestry<sup>5</sup>, it can become easy to pathologize the accumulated effects of historical trauma.

Young men of color continue to be constrained with social policies that have disproportionately affected their future success in education, housing, employment, and civil rights (Alexander, 2010). Currently, black men have been incarcerated at 6.6 times the rate of White men and nearly one in 10 men of African ancestry have been incarcerated at least one time in their lifetime (Department of Justice, 2012). Moreover, the recent investigation of the Ferguson Police Department, after the killing of an unarmed young man of African ancestry, Michael Brown, exposed that Ferguson police used force on 90% of encounters with African Americans (Civil Rights Division, 2014). If these were not enough, evidence within the education system leads to major discrepancies for young black men who are graduating from

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<sup>5</sup> While the literature uses the terms “African American”, “Black,” and African ancestry interchangeably, the term African ancestry will be used as it provides not only an indigenous framework, but a way to identify all individuals dispersed throughout the world during the history of human trafficking of African people.

high school at a 59% rate, nearly 20% lower than Whites (Schott: Foundation for Public Education, 2015). Most recently, studies have demonstrated that school teachers have exhibited implicit bias towards young black boys at rates exponentially higher than their White counterparts (Gilliam et al., 2016).

The educational experience is especially salient for young black males. Research demonstrates that boys of African ancestry receive less preferential or more negative treatment in school settings than their counterparts and includes more harsh punishments than other boys and girls (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008). Moreover, earlier experiences in academia are prophetic of outcomes and experiences of later peer discrimination and boys with more disadvantageous backgrounds may be more prone to the discrimination.

While adolescence is a poignant time for all teenagers, young black males must also deal with the overarching stressor of racial discrimination that colors their entire life palette. Higher achieving African American males are more aware of racial discrimination within the education system (Caldwell et al., 2004) and oftentimes learn to cope more successfully than those with fewer resources and living in communities that have fewer services. Factors that aid an individual in positive coping include developing a positive racial identity.

The responsibility of the community to raise the village children can be a critical component, but it continues to be maintained that families and caretakers are the primary role models. When the family system is disrupted, the child's emotional and psychological development can also become disrupted (Dyce, 2014). Families and caretakers that take a proactive role in socializing children to be proud of their cultural identity, raise children with better coping strategies to buffer the effects of ecological racial discrimination (Belgrave, Nguyen, Johnson, & Hood, 2011).



Parenting and mentoring children to become empowered in an environment with low expectations of success and surrounding systems of oppression is one step of the process of rehabilitating an entire community (Travis & Leech, 2014). The next step is for the community to reconstruct and rehabilitate young people to believe that they are equal to everyone else, to heal from the historical trauma, and to perform better in all aspects of life than the previous generation. The healing begins with grassroots and Indigenous collectivism, not traditional Western individualistic approaches (Grills, Aird, & Rowe, 2016).

### **African Spiritual Awareness, Spirituality and Spiritedness**

According to Tillman (2006), there are five dimensions in which researchers and mental health professionals can learn to become sensitive to African American realities. These include using culturally sensitive methods, using culturally specific knowledge that captures a lived identity, maintaining cultural resistance to theoretical dominance, interpreting data in a culturally sensitive way, and using culturally informed theory and practice. When these dimensions are considered as a basis for understanding the struggle of developing an African American identity, the retention of culture within a healing framework is meaningful.

Methods by which healing professionals can use these techniques begin with understanding the basic principles of African-centered values (interdependence, collectivism, transformation, and spirituality) into practices that help persons of African ancestry heal. These tenets are meant to help individuals find balance and harmony within a collaborative energy that orients with a natural order (Gilbert, Harvey, & Belgrave, 2009). Before therapists can begin to effectively help heal, it is critical for therapists to align themselves in a harmonious manner (Jamison, 2010; Kwate, 2005; Parham, 2012).

Phillips (1990) described NTU psychotherapy as an African centered and spiritually based approach to healing persons of African ancestry. The basic principles of NTU (meaning essence) are harmony, balance, interconnectedness, and authenticity. This is based on a set of assumptions described by Gregory and Harper (2001), that people are inherently good, with good intentions, who want to be happy. There is also an assumption that all behaviors are meant to “actualize potential” and healing through a natural process. While these assumptions include the therapist as the facilitator in the healing process, the idea that responsibility is also placed on the therapist in this process can be challenging for some therapists. The relationship that one has with this framework and working with persons who most closely identify with this culture becomes co-intentional (Friere, 1970).

### **African Cultural Reflection and Imperative**

It is well documented that human trafficking and historical trauma continue to plague the community of African ancestry as it has been well documented through political research (Richardson, Johnson, & St. Vil, 2014), sociological data (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Fisher et al., 2000), psychological findings (Adams, Dobles, Gomez, Kurtis & Molina, 2015), and educational results (Sue et al., 2009). While we understand that there are many ways in which communities of color have struggled, we also understand the ways in which the communities are able to heal (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Deacon, Nievar, & McCann, 2005). Persons of African ancestry are more likely to succeed when they are surrounded by culturally relevant resources and when they are supported by caretakers and role models who encourage youth to develop and maintain a strong cultural identity (Davis & Stevenson, 2006; Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen 2008; Syed & Juang, 2014). Using evidence based African centered practices for community programs and mental health services are known to be the most beneficial for

persons of African ancestry (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Frame & Williams, 1996; Travis & Leech, 2014).

Akinyela (2005) argues that it becomes critical to acknowledge what persons of African ancestry know as truths that begin with the cultural collectivistic values. The basic principles of Africentric values (interdependence, collectivism, transformation, and spirituality) must be put into practice that can help persons heal. Methods by which healing professionals can use these techniques begin with knowledge of a history of historical trauma when a client or patient walks into the space with the therapist (Graham, 1999). The treatment begins with the authenticity of the therapist and present in the room by paying attention to the beat of the conversation.

### **Collective Healing**

The development of a strong ethnic identity is correlated with resilience against stressors, psychological well-being, and increased self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen 1990). More research is published that empirically supports and validates the importance of applying the concept of resilience and healing in a broader community context (Goodkind, Hess, Gorman, & Parker, 2012). Historical trauma describes past injustices dealt to many cultures in the United States and can be defined in text books and by research experts as the long term, mass trauma (colonialism, slavery, war, genocide) to which populations have historically been subjected (Sotero, 2006; Evans-Campbell, 2008; McKnight, 2004; Gone, 2008; Goodkind et al., 2012). This trauma and historical experience has been translated into several facets of society and most notably within the education system.

Youth of African ancestry are marginalized in the school system and experience negative interactions with those who assert to be educating them. Especially significant are the challenges faced by young men who, without proper intervention through education and support from

family and community, develop poor self-perception, low self-esteem, and depression (Davis & Stevenson, 2006). Cultural intervention and education is a critical component for young people to minimize the effects of historical trauma and discrimination. Continuing the same path puts these young boys not only at risk for incarceration but for physical health problems such as hypertension and diabetes (Toldson & Toldson, 2001). On top of this, psychological treatment uses measures that fail to take into consideration cultural differences between western European philosophies and methodologies and the collectivistic and collaborative cultures of the African people (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007).

Trauma endured by an entire community has major implications for physical and psychological stress that originates in the social environment, which creates susceptibility to disease physically and psychologically (Toldson & Toldson, 2001). The results of this trauma include inadequate nutrition, excessive use of alcohol and drugs, poverty, crime victimization, all contribute to a disjointed nuclear family, which in turn becomes a cyclical situation that increases the stress and shortens the life expectancy of the African American community. Trauma is not limited to a single catastrophic event, it has an accumulated impact that reverberates throughout the population (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

The U.S. continues to be witness to residual effects of human trafficking and historical trauma through the desecration of human lives in recent history, namely rates of deaths, incarcerations, high school graduation, of young persons of African ancestry. These lasting consequences continue to be argued and researched by disciplines such as sociology and criminal justice, displaying a negative correlation between human trafficking in 1840 and the prevalence of black owned businesses (Wilkins et al., 2012).

We know that empirically derived cultural components include spirituality, ritual, the power of words, and dreams (Parks, 2003). While these features are presented and complete the African experience, rarely does this framework become prominent in holistically healing young men of color. There is an assumption that traditional therapeutic frameworks can be universal based on narrowing down the treatment to either biological or behavioral prescriptions. Holistic healing is best understood when cultural components are considered throughout treatment. Ultimately, in understanding that an entire community has endured collective trauma, we also recognize that the community can also learn to collectively heal through dismantling the lies and misperceptions.

### **Human Development and Learning/Accountability**

In a meta-analysis reviewing all the data from several studies related to African American adolescent well-being, evidence suggests that maximizing health trajectories for all youth is critical for a healthier version of development both physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Communities that reinforce morals, values and positive character and maintain sufficient levels of support are where youth will thrive (Travis & Leech, 2014).

Developing ones' identity encompasses more than understanding a person's history and how it relates to the present-day experiences. The key to developing the community is to help youth understand what it means to be who they are, comfortable in who they are becoming and how they want to continue to develop as a person within the African community. While the psychological awareness of people of African ancestry begins with the effects and impact of White supremacy, the exuberance of the African spirit gives life to the potential of change and liberation within the confines of who previously defined the community (Nobles, 2006).

We need a different approach to “healing” in our community, one that gives our community permission to mourn our shortcomings and the harmful effects of historical trauma. Rather than focus on traditional practices, mental health professionals will fare better with communities when interventions are developed to focus on soul healing through liberation (Danzon, 2012; Duran et al., 2008).

Even within the education system, there is a negative correlation between success in the education system and a young black man’s self-esteem. Higher achieving youth of African ancestry are more aware of the, microaggressions, discrimination, and racism within the academic system, ultimately increasing levels of anxiety and depression of our brightest youth within the community (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002). Ultimately a buffer can be developed between these stressors when the family and caregivers reflect pride and knowledge about the African American culture (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002). Helping our young people develop a strong identity and teaching how to “be” within that identity, is a critical step in developing the idea of Ubuntu.

Additionally, with facets of society pulling at our youth in a multitude of directions, what does the African experience mean to the young people of color? If the intent is to reflect on the human essence of the African people, then work within the community must be guided by a conversation that is completely different from those people whose intent is to invalidate the African experience and all of humanity (Ani, 1994; Devos & Banaji, 2005; Rowe & Aird, 2014). We have a responsibility to our ancestors to do better and if the Eurocentric mental health establishment was meant to dehumanize and diminish the African experience, it is the responsibility to change that by helping our young people understand the critical importance of building an identity from within (Nobles, 2006).

## Community Outreach

It is our belief, as promoted by the Emotional Emancipation Circles<sup>SM</sup>, that community activism is an important aspect of the movement toward empowerment, and it has been researched that integrating youth organizing and civic engagement has shown to positively influence young men of color psychological wellness (Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Travis & Leech, 2014).

Through the process of understanding the self and the critical importance of our cultural history, each person gains a better understanding of the relationship to the community and the responsibility of connecting with others from the past, present, and future. Connecting the past with the present is understood as commonplace in many cultural traditions (Sotero, 2006). We can better understand the contemporary community and the African ancestral teachings through proverbs and metaphors and in turn, we can help youth feel more connected to the larger cultural community (W.P. Brown, 2004; Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006). This will, in turn, allow for the development of community empowerment and citizen participation by our youth to continue to empower others through our own spiritual strength (Peterson, & Zimmerman, 2004).

Our spiritual awareness serves as a source of inspiration and allows us to connect with others in a way that allows others to grow in the process of human development and awareness. In doing so, we also become aware that how we share our spirit with others is through the ways in which are best for the community.

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## APPENDIX B

### IRB Non-Human Subjects Determination Notice



# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 2, 2017

Courtney Shen and Marlene Garza

Project Title: Reclaiming Empower, Agency and Collective Healing (R.E.A.C.H.) For Youth: An Adaptation of Emotional Emancipation Circles for Adolescent Males of African Ancestry

**Re: Research Study Not Subject to IRB Review**

Dear Ms. Shen and Ms. Garza:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Reclaiming Empower, Agency and Collective Healing (R.E.A.C.H.) For Youth: An Adaptation of Emotional Emancipation Circles for Adolescent Males of African Ancestry*, to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). After thorough review of your documents you have submitted, the GPS IRB has determined that your research is **not** subject to review because as you stated in your application your dissertation **research** study is a "critical review of the literature" and does not involve interaction with human subjects. If your dissertation research study is modified and thus involves interactions with human subjects it is at that time you will be required to submit an IRB application.

Should you have additional questions, please contact the Kevin Collins Manager of Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 310-568-2305 or via email at [kevin.collins@pepperdine.edu](mailto:kevin.collins@pepperdine.edu) or Dr. Judy Ho, Faculty Chair of GPS IRB at [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu). On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you continued success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,



Judy Ho, Ph. D., ABPP, CFMHE  
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB  
Pepperdine University

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives  
Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney

## APPENDIX C

## R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Facilitator's Handbook

# R.E.A.C.H. Youth

## Reclaiming Empowerment, Agency, and Collective

An Adaptation of Emotional Emancipation  
Circles<sup>SM</sup> for adolescent males of African  
ancestry

**Marlene A. Garza, M.A.**  
**Pepperdine University**

# FACILITATOR'S HANDBOOK

# R.E.A.C.H. Youth Facilitator's Handbook

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## Introduction

“The oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves.”

- Frantz Fanon

Emotional Emancipation, liberation and empowerment are about developing a strong identity, and with it, developing “a firm sense of self-esteem” as stated by Dr. Martin Luther King. Several considerations were incorporated into the development of these group outlines. First and foremost, the creation of these groups provides a space where young Black men can develop a community of like-minded and culturally similar peers where they can share concerns, fears, and joys. In addition, conversations will allow youth to have a collective space to participate in conversations related to the implicit and explicit perception of Black inferiority (Grills, Rowe & Aird, 2016).

Admitting that we are, in one way or another bound by the chains of this misperception, gives a person liberation from the burden of carrying around this negative stereotype; a stereotype created to allow for dehumanization, enslavement, colonization, and the subjugation of African people for centuries that has been ingrained in our intergenerational story.

Creating a group demanding liberation from the false belief of Black inferiority provides youth the opportunity to re-conceptualize the young Black man’s self-worth, well-being, and the positive possibilities and opportunities available to them. One way to reverse the negative trends in the Black community is to engage in the struggle that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called “psychological freedom.”

The purpose of this handbook is to create culturally-grounded and social justice-oriented group interventions for adolescent males of African ancestry. The primary goal of this handbook development is to provide a resource for mental health professionals and/or community-based organizations that can be used to promote empowerment, liberation, well-being, and social justice among a marginalized population within the United States.

## The Seven Keys to Emotional Emancipation for R.E.A.C.H. Youth

The seven keys to healing are adapted from the Emotional Emancipation Circles (Grills, Rowe & Aird, 2016) and are affirmations to the work required to free ourselves from the psychological and emotional binding that continues to tie persons of African ancestry to centuries of racism. The Keys provide the community reminders of what is important to share and teach to the younger generations to help us all free ourselves. These keys can serve as support in moments of stress, challenge, strain, and whenever youth are at risk to returning to old habits and unhelpful patterns of thinking. The keys are meant to inspire action, in terms what our youth think and perceive about their world. The table below provides an overview of each Key and the associated action.

<b>Key 1: African Spiritual Origins</b> We recognize that as children of God, our power-personal and communal-is boundless.	<b>Awareness:</b> I awaken to the reality that something all knowing, all powerful, all mighty is always with me.
<b>Key 2: Historical Moments and Movements</b> We realize that the history of our people started long before the tragedy of our enslavement.	<b>Awareness to Defiance:</b> I am inspired to defy the lie
<b>Key 3: African Cultural Origins</b> We understand that who we are and what we do reflect African Cultural Wisdom	<b>Self-Reflection:</b> I make a deep and honest examination of the effect of the lie on my life.
<b>Key 4: Human Development and Learning</b> We make an honest and fearless assessment of our character and choices that limit our community and our relationships with each other.	<b>Accountability:</b> With compassion, I accept my humanity, my shortcomings, and my choices while also knowing that I, and my community, can always be "mo better."
<b>Key 5: Ethics and Methods (Restoration)</b> We make a list of the instances in which we tipped the scales of balance by forgetting the need to manage emotions, thoughts, and actions.	<b>Restoration:</b> I cannot change the past but I can look into the light of a new day intentionally putting right conduct and good relations at the center of my life.
<b>Key 6: Our African Cultural Imperative</b> We realize that our African ancestry, which understands the significance of the collective/the community, is the basis for what is good, normal, and right about us.	<b>Connection:</b> Having set myself free, I embrace the path of Harriet Tubman committed to the well-being of my family and my community.
<b>Key 7: Spirit, Spirituality, and Spiritedness</b>	<b>Model and Serve:</b> Spiritually awakened I do the work of Harriet Tubman modeling the truth in all y affairs and carrying the



	message to defy the lie to others of African ancestry.
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## Overview of the R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group

### The Seven EEC Guidelines

The EEC<sup>SM</sup> program offers guidelines for setting standards of appropriate behaviors while participating in the groups developed for adults. The R.E.A.C.H. Youth group will also honor the guidelines developed for the EEC's while also providing an opportunity for the youth to develop their own self-identified ground rules during the first meeting.

#### 1) Believe in something greater than yourself

The groups operate from the understanding shared by many people of African ancestry that God is in and part of all people and all things. We believe in God who guides directs, and informs all life and who supports us in our quest for emotional emancipation and collective healing. Any reference to God during any group does not mean adherence to any one understanding of God. The groups shall not be in connection to or further any religious belief or activity. This group welcomes believers and non-believers alike.

#### 2) Be community centered

R.E.A.C.H. Youth groups are guided by the African worldview of **Ubuntu** "I am because we are." As members, we seek to live in the spirit of Ubuntu. Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated that "a person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good" and instructs us that Ubuntu emerges from a confidence that comes from believing that we belong to a greater whole and we are diminished when others are humiliated, weakened, or oppressed.

#### 3) Commit to Health and Wellness

The group purpose is to establish the emotional foundations for each of us to become stronger, healthier, safer, more caring people so that we create stronger, healthier, safer, and more caring Black communities in the U.S. and around the world.

#### 4) Defy the lie

The only essential expectation of the group participation and membership is to boldly defy the lie and embrace the truth. This means that we make a conscious effort to embrace the truth of Black humanity: the beauty, lovability, capability,

and worth as people created by God and reject the lies of inferiority and overcome the remnants of enslavement and racism.

5) *Pay it forward: Help others defy the line and embrace the truth*

Each group can fulfill the primary purpose by carrying the message to Black youth who continue to develop a multifaceted identity and are still burdened by the lie of Black inferiority. As we grow as a group we pay it forward, within and beyond the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group.

6) *Maintain R.E.A.C.H. Youth Confidentiality*

R.E.A.C.H. Youth members will maintain member confidentiality and anonymity in all communication with each other and with others outside of the group.

7) *R.E.A.C.H. Youth groups are about R.E.A.C.H. Youth content only*

To ensure that it is never drawn away from its primary purpose or drawn into any public controversies, R.E.A.C.H. Youth groups agendas will never support, finance, or lend the R.E.A.C.H. Youth name to any outside entity. This group is not meant to further any partisan or other political activities.

## The Seven R.E.A.C.H. Youth Principles and Values

R.E.A.C.H. Youth groups are guided by a set of core values and principles developed by the Emotional Emancipation Circles<sup>SM</sup> (Grills, Rowe & Aird, 2016) and adapted for this group. These values are integrated with the rich history of African ancestry and originate from the earliest compilation of ethical guidelines and are collectively referred to as Maât (the endless search for truth and justice) by Obenga (2004). Obenga suggested that Maât is a multifaceted, complex idea that includes a harmonious balance, seeks fair treatment of the oppressed, and has codified a set of rules for appropriate conduct. This group provides youth an opportunity for regeneration, transformation, and healing through re-centering the self in an African cultural principles, symbols, rules, norms and rituals. By operating from a foundational African cultural base, the symbols, lifestyles, and manners will no longer be contradictory. Each principle includes a sample proverb and an Adinkra symbol (from Ghana, West Africa).

### **Using the Seven Principles Within the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group**

The core cultural principles of the R.E.A.C.H. Youth are adapted from the EEC<sup>SM</sup> (Grills, Rowe & Aird, 2016) and include: truth, justice, respect, harmony, balance, reciprocity, and order. The seven principles will be shared with group members and posted so that the group can consider and discuss as part of the weekly group discussions.

The selected quotes and Adinkra symbols and proverbs are used to allow for further group reflection and insight into the meaning and application of each principle and the harmful effect of the myth and the lies. In the Maafa (the horrors of African human trafficking) and the contemporary oppression of colonialism and racism, people of African ancestry have been forced to hide our culture of origin and take on another group's cultural reality.




Emotional emancipation argues that we learn the lessons from our collective history and use our cultural principles to restore the basic foundations for each of us to become stronger, healthier, safer, more caring Black community.





The lessons we want to develop within this group includes:

- Daily practice of respect for self and one another
- Having more patience and perseverance
- Taking responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and the good of others in the community
- Recognizing interdependence and using cooperation, self-discipline, sacrifice, and unconditional love as our first response to how we treat others will foster strong families, strong communities, and a strong people.

These values embody a strengths-based perspective of and understanding of themselves as a person within the community and to recognize our community responsibility.

## The Emotional Emancipation Circle Principles, Proverbs, & Adinkra Symbols

Principle	Description	Proverb	Adinkra Symbol
Truth	Reflects our principled sense of purpose, in all we do, and a willingness to hold self and others accountable for speaking and living with trust and conviction.	<p><i>One falsehood spoils a thousand truths</i></p> <p><i>To grow and be good is better than to be born with goodness</i></p> <p><i>That which is good is never finished</i></p>	<p>58 </p> <p><i>Kramo Bone Amma Yeanhu Kramo Pa</i> "We learn better out of truth." Symbol warning against hypocrisy and deception</p>
Justice	Reflects our fundamental belief in and connection to God who guides, directs and informs all life; and requires us to treat others with fairness, honesty, and integrity. Where wrong has been committed, right it.	<p><i>All wisdom is from God</i></p> <p><i>He who upsets a thing should know how to rearrange it</i></p> <p><i>Anticipate the good so that you may enjoy it</i></p>	<p> <i>Epa</i></p> <p>Symbol of law and justice and discourages all forms of slavery</p>
Propriety (Respect)	Reflects our duty to be respectful, generous, and helpful in all our relationships; showing and communicating love and concern for the safety, welfare and needs of others; sharing joy, empathy, and patience with self, others and the world.	<p><i>When you are respected, respect yourself</i></p> <p><i>Talking with one another is loving one another</i></p> <p><i>Happiness is temporary; commitment is eternal</i></p>	<p></p> <p><i>Boa Me Na Me Mmoa Wo</i> "Help me and let me help you." Symbol of cooperation and interdependence</p>

Harmony	Reflects our essential interdependence, cooperation, and affiliation – a human-to-human orientation – that promotes connection, reconciliation and warmth with self and others.	<i>A brother is like one's shoulder</i> <i>Friendship is like a field you can harvest every season</i> <i>If you offend, ask for pardon, if offended, forgive</i>	 <i>Bi Nka Bi</i> Symbol of peace and harmony
Balance	Reflects the evidence of appropriate demeanor that combines emotion, thought, and action and leads to productivity and perseverance; requires us to manage our emotions – anger, joy, sadness, fear, and confusion.	<i>The day on which one starts out is not the time to start one's preparations</i> <i>Before healing others, heal thyself</i>  <i>You must act as if it is impossible to fail</i>  <i>You can destroy your now by worrying about tomorrow. (Joplin)</i> <i>Blessed are the hearts that can bend; they shall never be broken.</i>	 <i>Nyansapo</i> Wisdom knot Symbol of learning and experience and the capacity to make wise choices to attain goals
Reciprocity	Reflects our mutual give-and-take in work, creativity, expression and responsibility within our communities; preserving life, family, community and culture are our highest goals.	<i>Having been given, I must give</i>  <i>The cattle are as good as the pasture in which it grazes</i>  <i>The pot will smell of what is put into it</i>	 <i>Nkyinkyim</i> Symbol of initiative, dynamism and versatility
Order	Reflects our belief that all things have purpose and meaning and occur due to a rhythm in life that is independent of human will and intent. Thus, order leads to a clear sense of right,	<i>A person in touch with his origins, is the person who will never die</i>  <i>When a tree builds on its own roots, it will be healthy</i>  <i>A people with power look for the source of problems within themselves</i>	 <i>Mate Masie</i> Symbol of wisdom, knowledge and prudence

	wrong and veneration of ancestors.		
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## Mindfulness

The teenage years can be stressful. Couple the typical teenage stress with the everyday racism endured by young Black men, it can be no wonder why many more young men of color develop unhealthy stress levels than their White counterparts (Carter, 2007; Utsey et al., 2008; Magnus, 1999; Sellers, 2006). Anytime someone experiences excessive amounts of stress, people tend to get “stuck” in their thoughts. Mindfulness can be a remedy to avoiding an emotional experience brought on by daily stressors. Each R.E.A.C.H. Youth group session will incorporate mindfulness as a foundational component as a method to help each young person pay more close attention to how we live our daily life. It can bring an awareness to the physiological effects of stress on the body, in our heart, lungs muscles, and stomach.

Mindfulness can allow a person insight into moment to moment awareness by purposefully paying attention to our body and situations around us so that we avoid *“routinely and unknowingly waste enormous amounts of energy in reacting automatically and unconsciously to the outside world and to our own inner experiences”* (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p.11). By developing skills in Mindfulness, R.E.A.C.H. Youth group members may develop a more refined ability to:

- Monitor their personal experience with a focus on current experience rather than preoccupation on past or future events.
- Regulate attention
- Decrease negative health effects brought on by racial stress by redirecting automatic reactions to racial stress.
- Have greater ability to previous experiences that they may have actively ignored
- Develop an understanding of distressing stimuli without negative physical or emotional effects.
- Improve overall well-being, self-efficacy and decrease psychological distress that comes with being a teenager.
- Create healthy coping mechanisms

## Using quotes/proverbs/metaphors in R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group

“A wise child is talked to in proverbs” –Asante

For many cultures, proverbs and metaphors are used as important messages passed down from ancestors or elders that help us make sense of our environment. African culture specifically is rich in religious and spiritual traditions that can often be ignored in traditional mental health populations (Frame, 1996). We can better understand the contemporary community and the

African ancestral teachings through proverbs and metaphors and in turn, we can help youth feel more connected to the larger cultural community (Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006). It is culturally normative to use metaphors or quotes to convey meaningful themes situated in a broad metaphorical schema (Brown, 2004). For youth, it can be difficult to piece together themes without providing guidance by the way of quotes or metaphors that are better relatable. By using the quotes as a check-in can give group members the opportunity to situate within the theme. Each week, there will be a set of quotes to begin the conversations.

## Getting Started - Notes to Facilitator

The first few sessions of the R.E.A.C.H.-Youth groups lay the foundation for the group and can influence the level of participation for the whole group. It is important to set the right tone with the young folks and remember that all components of the initial few circles are designed to foster a community of people who feel safe sharing and inspired to participate in a group of their peers. It is a developmental journey that is salient for participating youth with limited resources to help to discover important components of their identity. Fellow members will become more conscious and begin to feel and embrace a heightened love of themselves and love for the community and peers. This love must be grounded in the knowledge that we are wondrously and fearlessly made by God, and/or that the understanding of God is the most powerful source of human strength. This awareness results in consciously choosing behaviors and decisions that reflects a youth's sense of worth and purpose. This enlightenment simultaneously results in stimulates a desire to share with others the freedom that comes with emancipation from the lie of Black inferiority.

The facilitator has the task of engaging youth in the group so as they look forward to the next group. All in the circle share one goal: *to emancipate from the lie of Black inferiority and manifestation of the fruits of truth*. Except for the first two group meetings, the facilitator's responsibility is to share a "key" in every session and explain the significance of the key in each person's life.

## Weekly Foundational Readings for the Facilitator

Each week's agenda will be paired with a few readings for the facilitator's situational awareness. The themes and activities for each week were carefully selected to build upon each person's identity as a collective. It is encouraged that facilitators review the articles and incorporate the ideas and considerations of the research into the conversations and process for each group.



In addition to becoming grounded in the readings, it is helpful to watch each of the videos, and consider what the themes of each video, audio, article, and spoken word means to you as a facilitator of young folk. As adults, we often forget that we too are triggered by our surroundings and by the things that we experience in the world. By reviewing the articles and the media pieces of each week, we can consider our reactions before sharing with the group. Group facilitators are encouraged to meet and discuss the media before and after each group to bring forth a collaborative and non-judgmental perspective.

## R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Facilitator's Weekly To-Do List

- Review critical readings for the week prior to group meeting
- Review each media piece and consider questions or issues that may arise in discussions
- Print necessary handouts for the week
- Prepare the room prior to the meeting, arrive early to set up the room with the necessary posters, handouts, internet settings, and introductory music
  - Be sure that EEC Keys are posted in the room
  - Keep EEC General Guidelines posted
  - Post group's "Intentions and Agreements" so that all can be reminded of the collective responsibility of participating and holding each other accountable
  - Core cultural principles of truth, justice, respect, harmony, balance, reciprocity, and order should also be posted with each member receiving a copy of "The Emotional Emancipation Circle: Principles, Proverbs, & Adinkra Symbols"
- Have supplies needed for each week readily available prior to the start of the group each week
- Bring in relaxation music for Mindfulness activity if needed.
- Make contact with all participants to remind them of the next group meeting.

## R.E.A.C.H. Youth GROUP OUTLINE

### Elements of Every Group (EEC Circle)

Every R.E.A.C.H.-Youth group meeting has five components. The average length of each session should be approximately 60 minutes with a strong consideration of the audience. Each group will include the following components

1. *Check-In*
2. *Introduction to EEC<sup>SM</sup> topic and Key*
3. *Activity*
4. *Process-discuss activity*
5. *Mindfulness exercise*

Each week there will be a different topic adapted from the Emotional Emancipation Circle<sup>SM</sup> Facilitator manual (2014). The theme will stay true to the EEC<sup>SM</sup> manual and activities, media clips, and discussions will be adapted and modified for young men.

Week/ Session	R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Themes
Week 1	Introductions- Establishing ground rules. Getting to know each other <b>“This is Me”</b>
Week 2	Strengths and Stereotypes
Week 3	<b>Key 1:</b> African Spiritual Origins (Awareness)
Week 4	<b>Key 2:</b> Historical Moments and Movements (Awareness to Defiance)
Week 5	<b>Key 3:</b> African Cultural Origins (Self-Reflection)
Week 6	<b>Key 4:</b> Human Development and Learning (Accountability)
Week 7	<b>Key 5:</b> Ethics and Methods (Restoration)
Week 8	<b>Key 6:</b> Our African Cultural Imperative (Connection)
Week 9	<b>Key 7:</b> Spirit, Spirituality, and Spiritedness (Model and Service)
Week 10	<b>Celebration-Next Steps</b>

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 1	
	Group Activity
Introductions- Establishing ground rules, Getting to know each other "This is Me"	<p>Group formation, learn why each member chose to attend group, understand how they identify with the world. Establish "intentions" and "agreements".</p> <p><u>Activity:</u> Learning more about each person. Facilitator models the activity, group share-discuss format for future sessions.</p>

### Week 1: Group Formation

Have background music playing that facilitates consciousness and the spirit of the liberation collaboration group.

Play: "A Dream" by Common and Will.i.am

Link: <https://youtu.be/XBa55sDTIiA>

### Recommended materials

Music player, music selections, poster paper, markers/color pencils

**Tip for the Facilitator:** Have the YouTube videos ready on your computer before the meeting starts, so that you can access them quickly.

### Call to Order

The opening of the group is signaled for members by playing selected empowerment music. Ask students to silence their phones and focus on being present in the group experience for the next hour.

### Welcome and Introduction

In the first group, state the reason and function of the liberation collaboration. Each member checks in by stating their name and explaining why they chose to participate in the group.

### Intentions and Agreements

Describe what intentions and agreements are. And share how they are relevant to the group.

Intentions: Intentions are defined as a determination to do a specific thing or to act in any way. When a group first comes together, it is important to develop

what you plan to provide and create collectively to achieve the groups' outcomes.

**Facilitators:** On a sheet of poster paper, allow the group to list "intentions" of the group. Some examples are "to actively participate" or "to support my brothers in their share out" It is helpful to reference the group intentions during the sessions to evaluate progress (or lack of) made. Allow for all members to provide suggestions to this activity.

**Agreements:** Creating agreements can also help to move important work in a positive direction within the group. These can serve as guidelines for the whole group. Agreements are basic ideals regarding the process of the group and the interactions of group members with each other. These are not rules, but norms, that the group believes they need to function successfully and become a more empowered group. The Agreements should be posted throughout the group sessions and serve as a reminder during the sessions.

*Facilitator: On another sheet of poster paper, allow the group to create and list Agreements for the group participation. Some examples are: "only one person speaks at a time" and "be open to considering new ideas and ways of thinking."*

## Group Activity

"This is Me" Members are given a sheet of paper and access to colorful writing utensils. Members are encouraged to create a tree and incorporate how they were grounded, what defines them now, and what they aspire to become. People will share their trees with the group.

The roots, representing "Belonging" are how a person is grounded in their community, who raised them, what has helped them become who they are.

The tree trunk represents "Being" in the here and now. What makes you who you are? What are the things that are important to you now?

The branches and the leaves represent "Becoming" who you want to become. What are your dreams and aspirations? What are the things you want to do in the future? The sky's the limit on the dreams you have for your future.

**Quotes Activity:** Discuss what the quotes mean to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for "Quotes for Week 1" handout.*



## Mindfulness activity

### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly if you haven't practiced this before, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).

There are two emancipation phrases that we will use during the mindfulness activity.

*"May I awaken to my power" and "I recognize that my power is boundless."*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in this moment. You don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

Now, each time you breathe in, I want you to say to yourself, "May I awaken to my power." When you breathe out, say to yourself "I recognize that my power knows no bounds."

## Closing Activity

Invitation to return next time, share ideas on activities and consider the topics we discuss in each session during the week. Each week we will introduce a new topic and ask for insight by each member. We invite active participation every week.

## Week 1 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Alexander, M. (2010).** *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

**Belgrave, F. Z., Nguyen, A., Johnson, J., & Hood, K. (2011).** Who is Likely to Help and Hurt? Profiles of African American Adolescents with Prosocial and Aggressive Behavior. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* , 1012-1024.

**McMahon, S. D., & Watts, R. J. (2002).** Ethnic identity in urban African American youth: Exploring links with self-worth, aggression, and other psychosocial variables. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(4), 411-431.  
<http://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.10013>

**Warfield-Coppock, N. (1992).** The Rites of Passage Movement: A Resurgence of African-Centered Practices for Socializing African American Youth. *Journal of Negro Education* 61(4), 471-482.

# "A Dream"

## Common and Will.i.am

I got a Dream  
 (That One Day) We gonna work it out out out  
 (That One Day) We gonna work it out out out  
 (That One Day) We gonna work it out  
 (I Have a Dream) I got a Dream  
 (That One Day) We gonna work it out out out  
 (That One Day) We gonna work it out out out  
 (That One Day) We gonna work it out  
 (I Have a Dream) I got a Dream  
 (That One Day) That one day  
 (That One Day) I'ma look deep within myself  
 (I Have a Dream) I gotta find a way...  
 My Dream Is To Be Free  
 My Dream Is To Be  
 My Dream Is To Be  
 My Dream Is To Be Free

In search of brighter days, I ride through the  
 maze of the madness,  
 Struggle is my address, where pain and crack  
 lives,  
 Gunshots comin' from sounds of Blackness,  
 Given this game with no time to practice,  
 Born on the Black list, told I'm below average,  
 A life with no cabbage,  
 That's no money if you from where I'm from,  
 Funny, I just want some of your sun,  
 Dark clouds seem to follow me,  
 Alcohol that my pops swallowed bottled me,  
 No apology, I walk with a boulder on my  
 shoulder,  
 It's a Cold War - I'm a colder soldier,  
 Hold the same fight that made Martin Luther  
 the King,  
 I ain't usin' it for the right thing,  
 In between Lean and the fiends, hustle and the  
 schemes,  
 I put together pieces of a Dream  
 I still have one

The world's seen me lookin' in the mirror,

Images of me, gettin' much clearer,  
 Dear Self, I wrote a letter just to better my soul,  
 If I don't express it then forever I'll hold, inside  
 I'm from a side where we out of control,  
 Rap music in the 'hood played a fatherly role,  
 My story's like yours, yo it gotta be told,  
 Tryna make it from a gangsta to a godlier role,  
 Read scrolls and stow slaves,  
 And Jewish people in cold cage,  
 Hate has no color or age, flip the page,  
 Now my rage became freedom,  
 Writin' dreams in the dark, they far but I can  
 see 'em,  
 I believe in Heaven more than Hell,  
 Blessings more than jail,  
 In the ghetto let love prevail,  
 With a story to tell, my eyes see the glory and  
 well,  
 The world waitin' for me to yell "I Have a  
 Dream"

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# This is Me



*Belonging*

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 2	
EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Stereotypes and Strengths	1) Check-In 2) What are people's strengths, community strengths, stereotypes, connecting with others, 3) Activity: (use Black Bruins clip), use handouts from EEC <sup>SM</sup> manual (below) 4) Process-discuss activity 5) Mindfulness exercise

## Week 2: Stereotypes and Strengths

Introduce theme: The goal of session is to have members share some of their favorite healing/empowering songs, quotes, poems, pieces of scripture, or things that they do—anything that they individually regard and turn to as a source of strength and inspiration in times of confusion, anxiety, and trouble.

Check in: Members will share their name and one way in which they seek strength and support

Quotes Activity: Discuss what the quotes mean to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for “Quotes for Week 2” handout.*

Recommended materials: poster/butcher paper and markers, Internet access, computer, LCD projector, blank wall/screen

**Tip for the Facilitator:** In addition to this group activity leading to a discussion about stereotypes, you can introduce this activity as an “ice breaker” meant to help the members get to know one another.

### Group Activity:

*Naming the lies:* Members are asked to brainstorm a list of lies/stereotypes/misperceptions about young men of color/Black males. (ACTIVITY SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN 30 minutes)-see attachment for full script.

Use examples: Black males are-lazy, have no morals, are stupid, etc. See handout for additional stereotypes and lies

*How do these lies/stereotypes get perpetuated?* Let's go back and name how or where the lie is spread. (Ex: boys are stupid: Perpetuated by putting kids in special education classes).

*(See attached document for script adapted from the EEC<sup>SM</sup>)*

### Closing Activity:

Recognize the need for our individual and community healing  
Exploring some of the many historical, systemic, and media lies about our humanity, heritage, being and our people. Discuss how these lies have affected each person.

Video Clips: <https://youtu.be/BEO3H5BOIFk> The "Black Bruins"  
*From our discussion, what do you take away from this video?*

Mindfulness activity: Connecting to the Spirit Within

#### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly even if we have practiced this last week, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in the here and now. You don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out. (Silence).

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

Now, bring your awareness to your body, starting with your left foot. As you breathe in, imagine that you are breathing in through your left foot, all the way up your body, to your lungs. As you breathe out, imagine that you are breathing all the way through your body through your left leg and out through your left foot. What sensations are you noticing in your left foot right now? Can you feel your toes, your arch, or your heel? Do you feel the warmth, or do you feel the coolness? Is there any tiredness or tension? What tingling or numbness do you feel? Is there any feelings of strength or comfort? Bring this same awareness to your entire body. Notice one part at a time. Bring your curiosity to each part of your body, notice the sensations as you breathe in and as you breathe out.

(Facilitator, walk the group through the right foot and leg, then abdomen and belly, then upper body and shoulders).

# Stereotypes and Strengths-ACTIVITY

## FACILITATOR Script:

*As we close out this session*

After the “Stereotypes and Strengths” exercise, it may be useful to help group members understand the effect of the lie on us as individuals and as a community. This document should be revisited and discussed in future circle sessions and incorporated into activities associated with each of the 7 keys.

*Facilitators are encouraged to hold on to the list for future reference.*

Instructions for the group activity (adapted from EEC<sup>SM</sup>) :

- 1) Use blackboard, whiteboard or have butcher/poster paper labeled with the four categories noted below:
- 2) Tell the group:  
*“we are going to ‘begin naming the lies’ so that we can understand them, sort the truths to sustain us on our journey, prepare us to discuss the 7 keys later so we can unpack the lies to leave them behind.”*

PART I – 5 minutes

Instructions: Use the script below and....

Let each person contribute one or two lies to the list until you have a nice healthy list in Column I. Write the lies on the board or butcher paper placed on a wall – if no butcher paper, people can use the participant worksheet and write the list on their sheets for later reference.

*Facilitator:*

*“We’re going to make a big chart together and begin naming the lies. Help me call them out. ‘black people...’”*

THE LIES <i>(Examples)</i>			
1. are stupid			
2. are ugly			
3. are lazy			
4. have no morals			

(Refer to list below for a sample of lies as a reference to stimulate discussion.)

## PART II – 10 minutes

Instructions: Use the script below and....

Let each person contribute how each of the lies on the list is spread, until you have filled out Column II. Write the lies on the board or butcher paper placed on a wall – if no butcher paper, people can use the participant worksheet.

**Facilitator:**

“Ok, we’ve got a pretty good list here – we’ve got to name it some more though. Now looking at our list, let’s go back and name how or where the lie is spread.”

THE LIES (Examples)	HOW/WHERE IS THIS LIE SPREAD? (Examples)		
1. are stupid	In schools, by putting our kids in special education classes		
2. are ugly	On TV shows and in magazines		
3. are lazy	The “welfare queen” myth in the news		
4. have no morals	Reality TV shows		

## “Naming It – Rejecting the Lies” (cont’d)

**FACILITATOR SCRIPT:**

“At the end of our time shared today, we will have begun to aggressively **Reject the lies and Reclaim our Collective Healing**:

1. Recognizing the need for our individual and collective healing
2. Exploring some of the many historical, systemic, and media lies about our humanity, heritage, being, and our people
3. Becoming aware of how some of the lies/messages impact our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and development
4. Establishing a culture of openness and trust

## PART III-8 minutes

**Instructions:**

Let each person contribute an answer to how the lie has affected them for one of the lies on the list until you have filled out the list in Column III. Write answers on the board or butcher paper placed on a wall – if no butcher paper, people can use the provided participant worksheet.

*Facilitator:* “We’re starting to get a picture of how deep and how far reaching the lie is and the work we need to do collectively. Let’s name it some more. How have these lies affected you?”

THE LIES (Examples)	HOW/WHERE IS THIS LIE SPREAD? (Examples)	HOW THIS LIE AFFECTED YOU? (Examples)	
1. are stupid	In schools, by putting our kids in special education classes	<b>I feel angry; stupid</b>	
2. are ugly	On TV shows and in magazines	<b>I am hurt</b>	
3. are lazy	The “welfare queen” myth in the news	<b>I feel embarrassed</b>	
4. have no morals	Reality TV shows	<b>I am pissed off, wanna hit somebody</b>	

#### PART IV-8 minutes

Instructions:

In column IV, let each person contribute a truth that refutes one of the listed lies. Write answers on butcher paper placed on a wall – if no butcher paper, people can use the provided participant worksheet.

*Facilitator:* “Our work is not done yet. We must name the truth about the lie. Let’s start by going back to our list one last time and give one example of a truth that defies the lie.”

THE LIES (Examples)	HOW/WHERE IS THIS LIE SPREAD? (Examples)	HOW THIS LIE AFFECTED YOU? (Examples)	LET’S TELL THE TRUTH (Examples)
1. are stupid	In schools, by putting our kids in special education classes	I feel angry; stupid	<b>We invented x, y, z</b>
2. are ugly	On TV shows and in magazines	I am hurt	<b>We set the standards of beauty</b>
3. are lazy	The “welfare queen” myth in the news	I feel embarrassed	<b>How can you pick cotton from sun up till sundown and be lazy at the same time?</b>

4. have no morals	Reality TV shows	I am pissed off, wanna hit somebody	<b>We're about the most church going, God fearing people on this earth</b>
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## STOP HERE AND RETURN TO CLOSING/MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

### FACILITATOR NOTE

*These lists take people to the heart of the matter right away....and presents them with material and an exercise that speaks directly to the reason they chose to participate in this group. It is also a very useful indicator for R.E.A.C.H.-Youth facilitators of*

- *the kinds of lies our youth might be troubled by,*
- *what lies they know (and may not be aware of)*
- *what could be useful areas to focus on in terms of stimuli and activities to hold people's interest in future R.E.A.C.H. groups.*

*This list now becomes a reference point for future R.E.A.C.H. Youth sessions not only for activities, but for youth to reflect on months down the road as they see how their understanding of the lies and emotional emancipation has grown.*

**After the "Stereotypes and Strengths" exercise, it may be useful to help group members understand the effect of the lie on us as individuals and as a community. This document should be revisited and discussed in future group sessions and incorporated into activities associated with each of the 7 keys.**

*Facilitators are encouraged to hold on to the list for future reference.*



## Examples of the Lies for the “Naming the Lies Activity”

### Black people are:

- Dumb
- Violent
- Stubborn
- Drug addicts
- Underachievers
- Loud
- Ignorant
- Can’t swim
- Underprivileged
- Can dance/sing
- Vulgar
- Oversexualized
- Lazy
- Mean
- On welfare
- Not black enough
- Angry
- Needy
- Inferior
- Unhealthy
- Aggressive
- Unoriginal
- Dirty
- Rappers, party animals
- Disrespectful
- Bums
- Steal/thieves
- Murderers
- Abusive
- Eat watermelon
- Drink kool-ade, grape soda
- Fat/unhealthy
- Ugly
- Barbaric
- Criminals
- Unloved, lovable
- Affirmative action hires
- Aggressive women
- Live in ghettos/slums
- Not fathers/don’t care about their kids
- Bad parents
- Play the race card
- Sell drugs
- Athletic
- Have “kinky” hair
- Exceptions to the rule if in prestigious position

## Week 2 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Fisher, C. B., Wallace, S. A., & Fenton, R. E. (2000).** Discrimination distress during adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29, 679-695.

**Stone, J., Harrison, C.K., Mottley, J. (2012).** Don't call me a student-athlete: The Effect of Identity Priming on Stereotype Threat for Academically Engaged African American College Athletes. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 34(2), 99-106

**Huynh, V. W., & Fuligni, A. J. (2010).** Discrimination hurts: The academic, psychological, and physical well-being of adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20(4), 916-941. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00670.x>

**Alexander, M. (2010).** *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 3	
EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 1: African Spiritual Origins (Awareness)	1) <i>Check-In</i> 2) <i>Introduction to topic</i> - History of spiritual origins, identify our power, strength, spirituality 3) <i>Activity</i> - Role models in our lives-what we have learned? 4) <i>Process-discuss activity</i> 5) <i>Mindfulness exercise</i>

### Week 3: Theme: Awareness

"I awoken to the reality that something all knowing, all-powerful, all mighty, is always with me."

### Key 1: African Spiritual Origins

We recognize that as children of God, our power-personal and communal-is boundless

Introduce theme. The goal of session is to have members understand their relationship with a being greater than themselves. It is important to develop the confidence and strength in knowing that someone serves as our protector.

Activity: Watering our spiritual garden

Materials needed: Plant and water

Each member of the circle performs a libation or watering ritual. The facilitator explains that in African philosophical thought, when we call on the names of our ancestors, it allows us to acknowledge that we continue to stand on their shoulders, that someone always has our back, and that we are here, and they are too because they live with us.

The facilitator has each person call the names of three ancestors (personal or historical) and share one positive thing about them. Other group members affirm the honor by saying "Asè" or "Amen" (Asè "Ah-shay" is loosely translated as "and so it is.")

Quotes Activity: Discuss what the quotes mean to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for "Quotes for Week 3" handout.*

Recommended materials: Internet access, computer, LCD projector, blank wall/screen, "Quotes for Week 3" handout.

Facilitator: this theme/Key wants us:

- 1) To understand the significance of spirituality in our lives
- 2) To know and draw strength from our connection with God-however we understand God
- 3) To know that we also draw strength from our connection to others
- 4) Understand our sources of power, by doing this we are able to stand tall and see through the lies (that we discussed in the previous session)
- 5) That we have a source of strength in our spirituality and in our connection to others

Group Activity:

Video clips:

<https://youtu.be/-o1GCF5Xthc> "He Still Loves Me" -Beyonce and Walter Williams, Sr (of the O'Jays)

Questions for discussion on this clip:

With respect to your power and spirituality, what does this clip make you think about or feel?

What makes you feel powerful?

What does spirituality mean to you and how strong is your spirituality?

How do you connect with your spirituality?

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/83gpNY17IHQ> "Mighty Blow" Soul Food

Questions for this clip:

What is important about our connection to others?

How does connection to others affect our own sense of power?

Closing Activity:

What is the takeaway with Key #1?

*Themes to cover:*

- We are children of God
- We get our power and strength from God through our spirituality
- We must nurture our spirituality so that we can hear when God is trying to tell us something
- We must recognize our power through connection to others....and draw on that to defy the lie and grow into all God designed us to be. This means we pay attention to:
  - The quality of our relationships with others-we get what we give
  - Understand that our family, friends, etc. are also struggling with the impact of the lie

Mindfulness activity:

#### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly even if we have practiced this last week, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

*(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).*

There are two emancipation phrases that we will use during this mindfulness activity, similar to the first week.

*"May I awaken to my power" and "I recognize that my power is boundless."*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in the here and now. You

don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

Now, each time you breathe in, I want you to say to yourself, "May I awaken to my power." When you breathe out, say to yourself "I recognize that my power is boundless."

### Week 3 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Harvey, A.R. & Hill, R.B. (2004)** Africentric Youth and Family Rites of Passage Program: Promoting Resilience among At-Risk African American Youths. *Social Work*, 49(1), 65-74.

**Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B, Nadal, K. L., Esquilin, M. (2007).** Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice. *The American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-86).

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 4	
EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 2: Historical Moments and Movements (Awareness to Defiance)	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic- Calling out the lies and telling the truth (cont'd), 3) Activity- use handout in EEC <sup>SM</sup> group handbook (pg 45), knowing our history, what is and isn't shared in history books, media, community. 4) Process-discuss activity- Discuss how current events impact each person 5) Mindfulness exercise

Week 4: Theme: Awareness to Defiance

"I awoken to the reality that something all knowing, all-powerful, all mighty, is always with me."

Key 2: We realize that the history of our people started long before the tragedy of our enslavement

Goals for Week 4:

- To understand the significance of knowing our history.
- To know that we draw strength from knowing the truth about our history and our connection to Africa.
- To understand our history which reveals now only what people of African ancestry have accomplished by also the incredible intellect, skill, tenacity, and creativity.

Check in: Question: From where did you learn the history of your heritage?

Facilitator: Knowledge is power. Knowing your history and your heritage strengthens you and allows for the ability to defy the lies we talked about in the previous group discussions. You are better able to correct someone or debate a point if you are equipped with facts and truths to back you up.

Quotes Activity: Discuss what the quotes mean to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for “Quotes for Week 4” handout.*

Recommended materials: Internet access, computer, LCD projector, blank wall/screen, copy of handout “Historical Facts for Key #2 Activity”

### *YouTube Video*

“What I wasn’t taught in school”: <https://youtu.be/TNfH41-LI4w>

Group Activity: Listen to song: “Don’t Shoot” by The Game:  
<https://youtu.be/ZZyZV9mvllM>

### Discussion:

Ask participants for their thoughts about the song and lyrics. What does it bring up for each person?

How do the two media pieces relate to your history and your experience?

Group Activity: Have members share reading the historical facts handout.

### Discussion questions:

What is surprising about the information you learned?

Who knew some of the historical facts and where were the facts learned?

How does knowing this make people feel?

What is the importance of knowing this information?

*For our whole life, someone else has controlled how we see ourselves.*

Interactive Activity and share out: After reading the historical facts sheet, listening to the song, and watching the video, and discussing what these themes mean to you, group members will have the opportunity to create a piece of poetry, rap, or spoken word. Members can work in minimum of two people per group or can work on it with up to 8 people together. Allow for 20 minutes to create and 3-5 minutes to share with the group.

**Reminder for Group Members:** We will be doing an activity next week that will require each member to use either a smart phone or laptop. Please remember to bring either device to the next meeting.



### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly even if we have practiced this last week, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

*(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax)*

### Mindfulness activity:

There are two emancipation phrases that we will use during this mindfulness activity, similar to the first week.

*"May I be inspired to defy the Lie" and "I recognize that my people's history is ancient."*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in the here and now. You don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

Now, each time you breathe in, I want you to say to yourself, "May I be inspired to defy the lie." When you breathe out, say to yourself "I recognize that my people's history is ancient."

## Week 4 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Davis, G., & Stevenson, H. C. (2006).** Racial socialization experiences and symptoms of depression among Black youth. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 303-317.

**Gilbert, D.J., Harvey, A., Belgrave, R. (2009).** Advancing the Africentric Paradigm Shift Discourse: Building toward Evidence Based Africentric Interventions in Social World Practice with African Americans. *The Social Worker*, 54, 243-252.

**Parks, F. M. (2003).** The role of African American folk beliefs in the modern therapeutic process. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(4), 456-467.  
<http://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy/bpg046>

## "Don't Shoot" by The Game

(feat. Rick Ross, 2 Chainz, Diddy, Fabolous, Wale, DJ Khaled, Swizz Beatz, Yo Gotti, Curren\$y, Problem, King Pharaoh & TGT)

*[Intro: DJ Khaled]*

Our Lord, grant us good in this world  
And good in the life, to come keep us safe from the  
torment of the fire  
As we keep our hands up high and scream for justice  
Ferguson, rest in peace Mike Brown and all the young  
soldiers out there  
God help us

*[Hook: TGT]*

Time to take a stand and save our future  
Like we all got shot, we all got shot  
Throwin' up our hands don't let them shoot us  
Cause we all we got, we all we got  
God ain't put us on the Earth to get murdered, it's murder  
God ain't put us on the Earth to get murdered, it's murder  
Don't point your weapons at me

*[Verse 1: Game]*

Seen the pictures, feel the pain, scandalous how they  
murder son  
Tired of them killing us, I'm on my way to Ferguson  
Talked to TIP, I talked to Diddy, them my brothers  
walking with me  
Mothers crying stop the riots, we ain't got to chalk the city  
I seen Cole out there, thought I should go out there  
They left that boy for hours in the cold out there  
They killin' teens, they killin' dreams (It's murder)

*[Verse 2: Diddy]*

Yo, come on we gotta stick together, we all we got  
Police taking shots and I ain't talkin' bout Ciroc  
I'm talking bout Emmett Till, I'm talking bout Ezell Ford  
I'm talking bout Sean Bell, they never go to jail for  
Trayvon over Skittles, Mike Brown Cigarillos  
History keeps repeating itself, like a Biggie instrumental  
America's a glass house and my revenge is mental  
Rather use my brain than throw a cocktail through a  
window

*[Verse 3: Rick Ross]*

I got the keys to the city still we left in the cold  
Hands in the sky, still was left in the road  
Ribbon in the sky, Michael Brown, another soul  
Stole by the system, black men we pay the toll  
The price is your life, Uncle Sam want a slice  
Black dress code now we looting in the night  
Now we throwing Molotovs in this holocaust

And I know they hate to hear me screaming, 'I'm a Boss!'

*[Hook]*

*[Verse 4: 2 Chainz]*

Tired of the okie-dokie, lying you Pinocchio  
Driving while black, tell me, where am I supposed to go?  
Gun shots hit the car, now I got the holy ghost  
If excessive force was a drug, then they overdosed  
Got us tryna protest, it's a slow process  
Heard it's a lot of rotten eggs in the crow's nest  
People praying on they feet, police holding on they heat  
Turned on the news and seen a tank rolling down the  
street

*[Verse 5: Fabolous]*

Yeah, I seen a lot of ice water tossed, and I know it's for a  
cause  
My only question is, what we doing for the loss  
Of Mike Brown? Cause right now, I challenge you to use  
your talents to  
Speak up, and don't you ever let them silence you  
Cause action speaks louder than words, that's what I  
heard  
Shot down with his hands up, that's what occurred  
Man that sound absurd  
Matter fact to me that sound like murder  
We want justice

*[Verse 6: Yo Gotti]*

Ay yo Game, I had a crib out there, I used to live out there  
So I know how niggas feel out there  
People stressing, protesting, unity is a blessing  
So it's time we come together, use our voice as a weapon  
I am Michael Brown, cause I stand for what he stand for  
News say we're looting, paint pictures like we some  
animals  
On my NWA CMG  
Holl'in' "Rest in peace Eazy and fuck the police"

*[Verse 7: Wale]*

Heard another brother slain up in St. Louis  
Sure the mother feel the pain, but what you famous  
doing?  
I'm sure the general population trying to be more active  
But when the light finally catches you, you ice challenge  
Okay, and I support the ALS just like the rest of them  
But you have yet to pay your debt, so you just flexing then

Cause everybody care for a minute, then stop  
People only there for a minute, then stop  
And what's the point of giving if you ain't giving your all?  
We never getting ahead, might as well give up your heart

## **“Don’t Shoot” by The Game (Cont’d)**

*[Bridge: TGT, King Pharaoh (Swizz Beatz)]*

Where does it end?

I got my hands up, what else am i supposed to do?

(Rest in peace to Mike Brown)

Where does it end?

(And all the other warring soldiers)

Tell me, where's the love for everything we're going through?

(That will not be on the news or televised, ah)

Mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy me

Hope that God can save us

Mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy me

(As we lead in peace)

*[Verse 8: Swizz Beatz]*

Martin Luther King had a dream!

But they ain't respecting Jesse up out here

And they don't really respect Obama out here

Lights out, go dark it's like a nightmare

How the fuck you play the game, but they ain't playing fair

It's going down, armageddon right here

Right now, not on TV, but right here

Put your flags in the air if you don't really care (Wave it)

We need justice, yeah, we need justice here

*[Verse 9: Curren\$y]*

I heard he surrendered but we all saw how they did him

Television broadcasts, a confused country

I'm a resident of a nation that don't want me

What's done is done, the town erupts in fury

And I'm already hearing bout this lopsided jury

Three faces like his, the rest another story

A lot of motherfuckers need to act more worried

*[Verse 10: Problem]*

The revolution has been televised

If I sit here and do don't do nothing, homie, that's genocide

Fuck that, we have arrived!

And who cares who ain't on our side cause we on our own

How do you preach peace to a family that just lost they own?

My brodie Game just banged my line like "We gotta do something"

All that marching and that peace ain't gonna fucking do nothing

Fuck it, my moms, sorry, I'm ready to rage

The police done let the animals out of the cage, oh lord it's

*[Hook]*

*[Outro: Game]*

Stand up

## HISTORY FACTS FOR Key #2 ACTIVITY

### Accomplishments of Ancient Africans *TAKEN FROM THE EEC<sup>SM</sup> LEADERS GUIDE*

#### Metallurgy

- Carbon steel was produced in Tanzania 1,500 – 2,000 years ago through a sophisticated method more advanced than that practiced in Europe.
- Pre-heated forced-draft furnaces were created in Tanzania better than the ones developed in 19th century Europe.
  - Near Lake Victoria there were 13 Iron Age furnaces that were created over 1,500 years ago
  - The temperature achieved in these blast furnaces was higher than any achieved in a European machine until the Industrial Revolution.

#### Astronomy

- Kenya has an astronomy observatory called The Namoratunga (which means stone people in the Turkana language) Kenya.
  - The Namoratunga consists of 19 huge stones arranged in rows dated 300 years before Christ
  - The stones represented an accurate and complex calendar system based on astronomy calculations from E. Africa made in the 1st millennium B.C
- Modern Cushites in E. Africa had a calendar based on the rising of certain stars and constellations.
- Kenyans plotted the moon's orbit up until the year 2000 between 500-700 years ago.
  - Estimated the moon's mass and nature
- The Dogon of Mali understood an elliptical orbit around Sirius A took 50 years to complete. Charted this star's course and trajectory up unto the year 1990.
- Dogon astronomer priests had a modern view of the solar system, referencing rings of Saturn, moons of Jupiter, and the Milky Way Galaxy.

#### Mathematics

- In what is now Uganda and Congo, the Ishango bone (20,000 years ago) had markings that represented a lunar calendar representing a period of 6 months. It also suggests that in this ancient period in Africa they had a mathematical understanding that goes beyond just counting.
- Yoruba urbanized farmers and traders used a complex number system based on 20 that relied heavily on subtraction
- In S.E Africa they used a system called "protomathematics" that has been traced back to 25,000 years ago
- Mathematical papyri in Egypt from 1800 B.C.E are believed to be the 1st math textbooks, contained formulas that allow for study in number theory, geometry

### Architecture & Engineering

- The Great Zimbabwe was a massive stone complex built 800 years ago.
  - Had 200 stone villages and housed 10,000 people.
  - It was the capitol of the Munhu Mutapa African empire that lasted for 300 years.
- Imhotep of Egypt is known as the first pyramid builder
  - Built the step pyramid Saqqara- the oldest monument in the world.
  - He was the first to plan and design immense funeral tombs, surrounded by a wall of stones and crowned by a pyramid.
  - He opened builders' yards to produce large carved stones and established processes to transport these stones by boat.

### Navigation

- West Africans developed numerous bouts and a 600-mile long marine highway.
- A network of trade routes between western and central Africa existed centuries before the Europeans.
- Africans used nautical science to navigate the Sahara desert.

### Agricultural Science

- Africans transitioned from hunting and gathering to scientific cultivation of crops occurred at least 7,000 years before people on any other continent.
- Africa was first to domesticate cattle
- The Mande people constructed trade routes and used wheeled vehicles drawn by small horses

### Medicine

- African plant medicine was more developed than any other medicinal practices in the world
- African medicinal practices included psychotherapy, diagnoses of diseases, anesthetics, antiseptics, vaccination, and surgical techniques
  - Developed aspirin
  - Nigerian medicine may have a breakthrough cancer treatment
  - Herbal medicine was extremely advanced, laid foundation for the treatment of psychosis
  - Performed skilled surgical procedures especially Caesarian sections, including anesthesia before Europeans
- African genius, Imhotep of Egypt is also considered the first physician in history.
  - He diagnosed and treated over 200 diseases, 15 diseases of the abdomen, 11 of the bladder, 10 of the rectum, 29 of the eyes, and 18 of the skin, hair, nails and tongue.
  - He treated tuberculosis, gallstones, appendicitis, gout and arthritis.

- He performed surgery and practiced some dentistry.
- He removed medicine from plants.
- He also knew the position and function of vital organs and circulation of the blood system.

### Writing Systems

- Africans invented and used nearly a half dozen scripts before the African Holocaust (slave trade)
- Nubians invented the meroitic script with influences from Egyptians
- Sudanese people influenced the hieroglyphics of Egyptians
- Egyptian hieroglyphics have been proven to have a strong influence on European writing systems
- Manding and Akan scripts of Saharan and Sudanic cultures were used by African scholars, priests, members of secret societies, and traders
- In the Sahara, the earliest form of writing was a syllabic system that incorporated hundreds of phonetic signs, shortened to between 22 and 30 key signs
  - This system was used as an alphabet by Egyptians, Meroites, Phoenicians, and Ethiopians

### Other Facts About Africa

- There is a total of 54 independent nations in Africa.
- Language is our thing. While Africa makes up about 16% of the world's population, fully one quarter of the world's languages are spoken only in Africa.
- Even though Egypt is most well-known for its pyramids, the Republic of Sudan have 223 pyramids, double the number of pyramids in Egypt. Sudan's pyramids are smaller and steeper than their Egyptian counterparts.
- Central eastern Africa is believed by most scientists to be the origin place of both humans and great apes. The earliest remains of the modern human species Homo sapiens have been found in Ethiopia and date to roughly 200,000 years ago.
- The African region of Ethiopia is featured prominently in several ancient Greek dramas and poems. The Greek poet Homer mentions Ethiopians in both the Iliad and the Odyssey as a "blameless race" and "amongst the noblest of men."
- Only two African nations have never been under European colonial power: Liberia, an independent nation settled largely by African Americans, and Ethiopia, an Orthodox Christian nation known in Europe as Abyssinia. The rest of the continent was colonized by European imperial powers in the nineteenth century "scramble for Africa."
- During the 1950s, colonized African states began to fight for independence from imperial rule with Libya being the first African nation to declare its



independence. The independence movements brought great hope and inspired U.S. civil rights leaders like Malcolm X to fight for increased freedoms at home.

- In 295 BC, the Library of Alexandria was founded in Egypt. It was considered the largest library in the classical world.
- Three philosophical schools in Mali existed during her golden age (12th–16th centuries) University of Sankore, Sidi Yahya University, and Djinguereber University.
- By the end of Mansa Musa's reign, the Sankoré University had been converted into a fully staffed University with the largest collections of books in Africa since the Library of Alexandria. The Sankoré University was capable of housing 25,000 students and had one of the largest libraries in the world with roughly 1000,000 manuscripts.
- Timbuktu was a major center of book copying, religious groups, the sciences, and arts. Scholars and students came throughout world to study in its university. It attracted more foreign students than New York University.
- In Africa, the Egyptians were the first to develop a 365 day, 12-month calendar.

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 5	
EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 3: African Cultural Origins (Self-Reflection)	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic-Self-Reflection 3) Activity- Implicit Associations Test activity. 4) Process-discuss activity- Identifying how stereotypes, lies, untruths have played out in our lives. Discuss quotes from handout. Recreating our truths and our story, healing 5) Mindfulness exercise

### Week 5: Theme

I make a deep and honest examination of the effect of the lie on my life.

Key 3: We understand that who we are and what we do reflect African cultural wisdom

### Goals for Week 5:

- To introduce and begin to discuss key sources of wisdom from Africa, where, the whole world now acknowledges, early man and civilization began.
- To center ourselves in African cultural wisdom, which provides a wealth of resources about what it means to be human and the standards by which we can live our lives
- To develop a strong cultural wisdom that provides tools to do self-examination to understand how the lies have impacted us historically (as a community) and us personally

Check in: What does cultural wisdom mean to you?

Facilitator: *African cultural wisdom is best understood as a guide for people on what it means to be human, what is important in life, how to live a good life, how to be happy, and how to develop and participate in healthy loving communities.*

Recommended materials: Internet access, computer, LCD projector, blank wall/screen, have members bring their own phone or tablet to complete the test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>

Group Activity: We are going to take a short test online, get out your phones/tablets and put this website into your browser: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html> and select the “Race IAT” and begin.

Questions for after activity:

What issues did your scores on the test raise?

To what extent do you think the scores and results apply to your life?

In what ways have you made implicit assumptions about others?

How does it affect your view of Black people?

How does this test, the results and the conversation make you feel?

Have others made implicit assumptions about you? What are some examples?

Why is this information important? Why is knowing this important?

Partner Activity: Self-Talk

Materials: Pens and paper

Facilitator: explain to members that they have a couple of minutes to write three positive and three negative statements about themselves that they usually tell themselves (about school, friendships, family, etc). Once they’ve completed the individual activity, have them pick a partner. Have each partnership discuss both positive and negative traits and collaborate on ways that the negative statements can be reworded into positive statements.

Questions to ask:

How does this issue impact my life?

How do I choose to change the behavior? If I choose to change it, in what ways will it shed my shame or guilt about the impact in my life?

Video: watch video “My daddy”: <https://youtu.be/3y4UFQCi8nc>

Questions for after video:

What themes stood out in this piece?

What was it that his father continued to share with him at a young age?

In what ways does this resonate with you?

Closing Activity:

In what ways do you plan to use what you know with others?

Discuss African Cultural Wisdom:

“Never forget where you came from and praise all the bridges that carried you over.” –Fannie Lou Hamer

Mindfulness activity:

Breathe in: “May I deeply examine the effect of the Lie on my life.”

Breathe out: May I understand that who I am reflects African cultural wisdom

### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life’s daily stressors.*

*Let’s all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly even if we have practiced this last week, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).

There are two emancipation phrases that we will use during this mindfulness activity, similar to the first week.

*“May I deeply examine the effect of the Lie on my life” and “May I understand that who I am reflects African cultural wisdom.”*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in the here and now. You don’t need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

Now, each time you breathe in, I want you to say to yourself, "May I awaken to my power." When you breathe out, say to yourself "I recognize that my power is boundless."

## Week 5 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Thomas, A. J., Speight, S., & Witherspoon, K. (2010).** Racial Socialization, Racial Identity, and Race-Related Stress of African American Parents. *The Family Journal*, 18 (4), 407-412.

**Caldwell, C. H., Kohn-Wood, L., Schmeelk-Cone, K., Chavous, T., & Zimmerman, M. (2004).** Racial discrimination and racial identity as risk or protective factors for violent behaviors in African American young adults. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 91-105.

**Foster-Fishman, P., Nowell, B., Deacon, Z., Nievar, M. A., & McCann, P. (2005).** Using methods that matter: The impact of reflection, dialogue, and voice. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 36(3-4), 275-291. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-005-8626-y>

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 6	
EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 4: Human Development and Learning (Accountability)	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic- What is character? How we shape it and how is it shaped by external forces? Think about views we have of ourselves 3) Activity- Activity: Developing and stating our personal core values and discuss and create future goals. 4) Process-discuss activity 5) Mindfulness exercise

Week 6: Theme: With kindness, I accept all of me, including my good and bad decisions while also knowing that I, and my community, can always be “more better”

Key 3: “Human Development and Learning: We make an honest and fearless assessment of our character and choices that limit our community and relationship with each other.”

Introduce theme. This key sets the stage for what is right and good behavior and actions necessary to see how the lie has affected you in your life. How our actions are shaped by external influences allows a person to forgive yourself, to understand the effects of racism on what you do and how you treat others.

Goals for Week 6:

- Recovery-healing, wellness, and empowerment are possible even though our community has been harmed
- Acknowledgement-recognizing and accepting the effects of racism have had on our lives
- Responsibility-recognizing the need to change and embracing the responsibilities that come with knowing.

Check in: “Every defeat, every heart break, every loss contains its own lesson on how to improve your performance the next time.” –Malcolm X

Video: Dr. Amos Wilson on consciousness and values: <https://youtu.be/--Qrq0NBpU>

Jesse Williams BET Humanitarian Award Speech:  
<https://youtu.be/orXogk3euMA>

What does the quotes mean to you in your journey? What is the message or guidance being offered?

What do these two videos and statements have in common?

Recommended materials: Internet access, computer, LCD projector, blank wall/screen, paper, writing utensils

Activity: Creating and writing down our own personal principles and values

Facilitator: In this activity, most group members can work alone or can choose to work with a partner. Creating and writing down our core values is an important step in our reshaping the way we see ourselves and how we envision our future. All that we do should be based on what we believe in.

In the first part of the exercise, we will begin with a writing activity. Members will write on their own, the answers to these questions:

- 1) Your definition of what it means to be Black in the US.
- 2) What others believe it to mean to be Black in the US
- 3) What am I currently involved in at school, in my community, with my family, with religion?
- 4) In what ways am I giving back or playing an influential part in my community?
- 5) Who are some influential leaders that you look up to?

A principle is a fundamental law, doctrine or assumption, a rule or code of conduct

What we do affects others and our actions impact other people. In what ways do your actions impact other people?

When you think of other, business, organizations, people, those who have a clear vision on who they are and what they stand for, are more visible:

Who are some people that we know who have a clear vision and set of principles that they stand for?

**\*\*Barack Obama** (President Obama is the 44th president of the United States and the first African-American to serve. Prior to taking office, he was a U.S. senator from Illinois. President Obama has fought for issues ranging from universal health care to same-sex marriage.

**\*\*Cullen Jones** (Swimmer, on the 2008 Olympic team. “Make a Splash” program trying to improve minority participation in swimming

**\*\*Neil deGrasse Tyson.** This well-known astrophysicist and cosmologist is the fifth head of the Hayden Planetarium in New York City. As a popular voice for all things astronomy, he most recently began hosting *Star Talk*, a talk show on the National Geographic Channel.

We are going to write down the things that we believe in, what we stand for, and how we want to be remembered.

Each person is going to write down three or four different principles about how you want people to remember you by. We can practice first.

Facilitator: We will practice with one famous leader

After writing down our personal principles, I want you to think about all the activities in your life that fit in these principles. What is important to you? How do your principles reflect this?

Next, I want you to consider the activities that do not fit into these principles and consider the value of investing time in these activities

Questions for after activity:

How can you use this in your life?

What activities will you change after this exercise?



## Mindfulness activity

### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly even if we have practiced this last week, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in the here and now. You don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

Notice how you are feeling right now, in this very moment. Are you feeling calm, relaxed, stressed, nervous, angry...whatever it may be, notice it as you breathe in and notice it again as you breathe out. Remind yourself in this moment that there is nothing else you need to do and nowhere in this moment you need to be except for fully present.

Now intentionally, bring a smile to your face. Let this be a reminder to bring loving kindness to yourself, remember the power that you have as you breathe in and recognize your own strength as you breathe out. Keep your smile as you breathe. Whatever happens through the day, know that you can breathe and smile.

### Week 6 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Duran, E., Firehammer, J., Gonzalez, J. (2008)** Liberation Psychology as a path toward healing cultural wounds. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 86(3). 288-295.

**Constantine, M. G., & Blackmon, S. M. (2002).** Black Adolescents' Racial Socialization Experiences: Their Relations to Home, School, and Peer Self-Esteem. *Journal of Black Studies* , 322-335.

**Nobles, W. W. (2006).** To be African or not to be: The question of Identity or authenticity – Some preliminary thoughts [1997]. *Seeking the Sakhu: Foundational Writings for an African Psychology*, 318–339.

## What do we stand for?

Principle 1

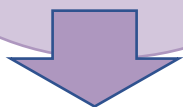
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What activities in my life can be associated with this value/principle?

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Principle 2

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What activities in my life can be associated with this value/principle?

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Principle 3

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What activities in my life can be associated with this value/principle?

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Principle 4

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What activities in my life can be associated with this value/principle?

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## R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 7

EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 5: Ethics and Methods (Restoration)	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic 3) Activity- Street Lights activity, "Letter to Hip Hop" discussion 4) Process-discuss activity- Identify potential set-backs (school, community, home) and develop preventative ways to overcome the challenges, continue discussion about core values 5) Mindfulness exercise

Week 7: Theme: Restoration. "I cannot change the past, but I can look into the light of a new day intentionally putting right conduct and good relations at the center of my life.

Key 5: We make a list of the instances in which we forgot the need to manage emotions, thoughts, and actions. Reacted without thinking, or just didn't know any better.

Introduce theme: This week is about the importance of having balance in each aspect of our lives. It is about 1) the harmony of opposites (ying yang, up and down), 2) maintaining balance in life: of self-indulgence and sacrifice, joy and pain, etc. Let's think about times when we have felt like our life was off in some when we may have forgotten to manage our emotions and/or our reactions to situations.

Goals for Week 7:

- To arm ourselves with the knowledge and practice of balance to increase our capacity to understand the relevance of opposites and to "intentionally" manage our emotions, thoughts, behaviors and relationships with others
- To focus the light of discovery on looking deeply at our own feelings-how our own contributions have led us to accept the lies of Black inferiority
- To begin moving toward right conduct (restoration-restoring natural, normal, healthy African behavior grounded African cultural wisdom) and good relations with one another

Check in: What or who do you believe you are a reflection of? In what ways can you consider balance in your life?

Quotes Activity: Discuss what the quotes mean to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for "Quotes for Week 7" handout.*

Recommended materials: LCD projector, access to internet, laptop

YouTube connection: Play "Letter to Hip Hop" Bridget Gray:  
<https://youtu.be/UfIBAWAneoo>

Questions for after activity:

- 1) What do you think about what Bridget Gray says?
- 2) How has the Black community cooperated in its own oppression, through music/hip hop?
- 3) In what way have you consented to feeling inferior? How did that happen?
- 4) Why did we let it happen?

The "Street Lights" activity: Give members the attached handout to complete for themselves.

*Using the activity that we completed last week, and considering the things that we have discussed earlier, this handout describes ways in which we can continue our restoration. Have a few people share out their answers.*

- 1) What did you learn from this exercise and your choices?
- 2) In what ways were/are you able to forgive yourself?
- 3) What are the barriers to forgiveness?
- 4) How is this connected to the lie we have been told of our inferiority?

Closing Activity:

"It is the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen." -Muhammad Ali

"As we close out our learning about the Fifth Key, we end with practicing mindfulness-creating both personal and communal space for deep reflecting on the experience of empowerment."

(Ask participants) Who can describe what mindfulness is in the group and outside of the group?

*Mindfulness is about being in the present moment and maintaining an active awareness of our thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves, as we are, without judgment."*

### **FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness**

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may begin to feel comfortable, as we have practiced it for several weeks now.*

*(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).*

### **Mindfulness activity:**

There are two emancipation phrases that we will use during this mindfulness activity, similar to the first week.

*"May I center my life in right conduct and good relations" and "May you center your life in right conduct and good relations."*

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in the here and now. You don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

Now, each time you breathe in, I want you to say to yourself, “May I center my life in right conduct and good relations.” When you breathe out, say to yourself “May you center your life in right conduct and good relations.”

### Week 7 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Chavous, T. M., Rivas-Drake, D., Smalls, C., Griffin, T., & Cogburn, C. (2008).** Gender matters, too: the influences of school racial discrimination and racial identity on academic engagement outcomes among African American adolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, 637-654.

**Harrell, S. (2000).** A multidimensional conceptualization of racism-related stress: Implications for the well-being of people of color. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 70(1), 42-57.

**Danzer, G. (2012).** African-American's Historical Trauma: Manifestations in and Outside of Therapy. *The Journal of Theory Construction and Testing*, 16 (1), 16-21.

**Allison, K. W et. al. (1999).** Life Experiences among Urban Adolescents: Examining the Role of Context, 70(4), 1017-1029.



## "Street Lights"



	RED LIGHTS  Identify examples of situations where your emotions, thoughts, and/or actions led you to poor choices and write down what you would like to STOP doing in your life.	YELLOW LIGHTS  Identify the strengths in your life that allow you to continue to move forward. Write down those things that you would like to continue doing	GREEN LIGHTS  Identify the changes that you would like to make in your life that fit more closely in with your newly developed goals and values.
PERSONAL			
Family			
Neighborhood			
Community and/or Church			



## R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 8

EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 6: Our African Cultural Imperative (Connection)	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic- Creating community, connecting with others, future planning 3) Activity- what are our expectations (of our self and of the community) as young Black men? 4) Process-discuss activity 5) Mindfulness exercise

Week 8: Theme: Having set myself free, I embrace the path of Harriet Tubman committed to the well-being of my family and community.

Key 6: We realize that our African ancestry, which understands the significance of the collective/the community, is the basis for what is good, normal, and right about us.

Introduce theme. The collective/community: Key 6 allows us to ground ourselves in the restoration of the African cultural values of the primacy of collectivity and community. Community nurtures and sustains us and in order to remain in place, we must nurture community by taking responsibility to be attentive to the needs of others. We cannot have true happiness if your sisters and brothers are suffering in your midst. We value connection that that reflects the primacy of community.

Goals for Week 8:

- To understand and take responsibility for nurturing and sustaining community.
- To know and embrace the strength that we draw from our connection and contribution to community
- To understand that you cannot be free if your brothers and sisters are not also free.
- By understanding these sources of our power we are able to stand tall and see the impact of the lie on our communities.

Facilitator: The previous weeks opened the door to reevaluate ourselves and developing a strong balance within our life. This week we're taking it further by grounding our restoration and healing in the African cultural value of the primacy of collectivity and community. Community nurtures and sustains us. In order for us continue our strength within our community we must also nurture this community by taking responsibility to be attentive to the needs of others. We cannot have true happiness if our brothers and sisters are suffering in our midst. In the context of ongoing racism, we value CONNECTION that reflects the primacy of community. Knowing this, we also recognize that placing value on the importance of community and responsibility for others requires the courage and commitment of a Harriet Tubman. This courage is grounded in the acceptance that we cannot be free if our brothers and sisters are not free.

Check in/Quotes Activity: Discuss what the quotes mean to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for "Quotes for Week 8" handout.*

Recommended materials: Internet access, Projector, Laptop

Watch YouTube video: Akeelah and the Bee "50,000 coaches"  
<https://youtu.be/oEmtA1mHpt4>

Questions to ask regarding the clip:

- What is going on with Akeelah? What does this mean for her?
- Where else do you see this support?
- Are you your brother/sisters keeper? What does this mean to you?
- What does "brother" and "sister" mean to each of us?
  - Where did we learn what this means in our lives?
- What are the barriers to being each other's keeper?
- What does it mean to be connected to your community?

Watch video: <https://youtu.be/sgSlrhQGuyM>  
TEDxStanford-Student Body leaders

**Key points of the speech:**

- 1) Change the script, change the show
- 2) Build the stage, pass the mic
- 3) Always sing your song, but in the key of your audience

Questions to ask regarding the clip:

In what ways did this message speak to you?  
What does it mean to be an activist?  
How do you consider “activism” in your life and what does that mean for the community?  
What does leadership mean?

## Mindfulness activity

### FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life’s daily stressors.*

*Let’s all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may begin to feel comfortable, as we have practiced it for several weeks now.*

(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).

Facilitator: Notice how you are feeling right now as you sit here in the middle of the day. Notice what your body feels like and to what energy your body is giving attention, is it stress or agitated? Depressed or angry? Whatever it is, notice it. Part of mindfulness is providing a space to give permission to just being: breathing and smiling. You may be thinking, *why should I smile when I’m not feeling happy?* Intentionally smiling, through this mindful process, allows each of us the opportunity to love ourselves and to be happy with who we are.

As you are breathing, I want you to send some love to yourself.

Breathe in: I breathe in the love that surrounds me

Breathe out: I smile

## Week 8 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

- Watts, R. J., & Flanagan, C. (2007).** Pushing the envelope on youth civic engagement: A developmental and liberation psychology perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 779-792.
- Sotero, M. (2006).** A conceptual model of historical trauma: Implications for public health practice and research. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice* , 1 (1), 93-108.

R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 9	
EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Key 7: Spirit, Spirituality, and Spiritedness (Model and Service)	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic- Giving back-planning an activity for community (church, school, neighborhood) 3) Activity where people can share their knowledge, identify how young males can serve as role models to younger individuals (use quotes and discuss from Key 7) 4) Process-discuss activity

Week 9 Theme: Spiritually awakened, I do the work of Harriet Tubman, modeling the truth in all my affairs and carrying the message to defy the lie to others of African ancestry.

Key 7: We are empowered, knowing that ultimately our strength comes from our spirituality and our spirituality connection to one another.

Introduce theme.

**Facilitator:** "Spirituality and our spiritual connection to one another: God, however, you understand God and God's presence, can connect each of us to a source of inspiration and a strong connection with others. Key 7 unlocks a reality that gives us permission to bond with others, creating a God-created intertwined relationship with other people, which is a responsibility to show the best of your God-given self (*modeling*), and the need to empower others as we each have been empowered (*serve*). The more others are empowered the more intensively alive and invigorated we have become."

Goals for Week 9:

The goals of the seventh key taps into 3 components:

- To understand and embrace God's presence as a source of inspiration and connection to others
- To understand the responsibility to show the best of your God-given self (*modeling*).
- To embrace your ability to empower others as you have been empowered (*serve*).

Facilitator: “Let’s reflect on these quotes and what they mean to you in the journal for emotional emancipation. What do you think they mean and how do they reflect in your life?”

Quotes Activity: Discuss what the quotes means to each person. Everyone takes a quote to read to the group from a bag of several quotes to reflect on for the check-in and for the session itself.

*See Appendix for “Quotes for Week 9” handout.*

Recommended materials: Projector, laptop, access to the internet, magazines cardstock paper, markers, scissors, tape, and glue

Watch YouTube video: Maya Angelou-“Love Liberates”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbeckV2xR14>

Questions for after activity:

- Thinking about the ways in which Maya Angelou talked about liberation, in what ways do you see love liberating you in your life?
- How do we become aware of this liberation in our daily lives?
- How can we keep this kind of liberation in our minds even on the difficult days?
- In the first week, we talked about why we were here, the strengths and stereotypes of our community. Keeping that in mind, why is it important to consider love as a liberation mechanism?
- How does this relate to the lie?

Activity: Creating your Community: Developing a R.E.A.C.H. (Vision) Board

Facilitator script:

*“In reflecting on the various activities that we have completed during the past several weeks, this activity asks us to consider more than who we are and what we stand for as an individual, we want to also remember the importance of staying connected to the community. I want each person to think about the ways that we can incorporate what we learned into our community. We will spend the next half of the meeting creating a R.E.A.C.H. board that represents our community, what we can do to stay connected, in addition to developing our ways to maintain a strong commitment to our community.”*

Hand out paper, magazines, and writing utensils

Sharing our vision boards: Let's share out our vision boards, pick a couple of parts of your R.E.A.C.H. board that you would like to share with the group.

Mindfulness activity:

### **FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness**

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly if you haven't practiced this before, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

*(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).*

Take a moment to become aware of one or two things that you can be appreciative, like what have you enjoyed lately or what activities are fun? They can be big accomplishments, or they can be small things like the meal you enjoyed at lunch. They can be things you noticed during the week that put a smile to you face.

As you pay close attention to your breathing, take an inventory of these things that you are grateful for in your life. Breathe in each of these thoughts and breathe out your gratitude for the experience.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath.

## Week 9 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Caldwell, C. H., Kohn-Wood, L., Schmeelk-Cone, K., Chavous, T., & Zimmerman, M. (2004).** Racial discrimination and racial identity as risk or protective factors for violent behaviors in African American young adults. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 91-105.

**Siegel, D. J. (2001).** Memory: an overview, with emphasis on developmental, interpersonal, and neurobiological aspects. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40 (9), 997-1011.

**Graham, M. J. (1999).** The African-Centered Worldview: Toward a Paradigm for Social Work. *Journal of Black Studies*, 30(1), 103-122.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/002193479903000106>



## R.E.A.C.H. Youth-WEEK 10

EEC <sup>SM</sup> Key	Group Activity
Celebration- What Next	1) Check-In 2) Introduction to topic - Applying the knowledge of "Reclaiming Empowerment, and Collective Healing" to the world, remembering it in our heart and mind. 3) Activity- Validations activity: "Letter to Self" 6 months from now, 4) Process-discuss activity- take-away messages 5) Mindfulness exercise

Week 10: Theme: Taking the knowledge that we have learned from the past ten weeks, it is our responsibility to recognize and celebrate our growth in the process and share our awareness with others

Goals for Week 10:

- To evaluate our growth in the past ten weeks.
- Write a letter to our future self to remind us of the work that we have accomplished.
- Review our goals, principles, and future plans

Check in: "Validations are an important part of this process. We will go around and say a few things that we have learned from someone else in the group, something we may be proud of, or anything that you think will bring value to this process. What will you take away with you?"

Recommended materials: Handout in Appendix labeled "Letter to Self" and writing utensils

Facilitator: "Each group member will have the opportunity to write a letter to your future self. Discuss some of the skills you have learned, write about events that may have happened, or remind yourself of goals that you developed in this group. Feel free to take as long as you need in this activity."

Complete R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group evaluation

Closing Quote:

“It is the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.” –Muhammad Ali

Mindfulness activity:

### **FACILITATOR Script for Mindfulness**

*As we close out our learning about who we are and what each of us brings to the group, we will end the session with practicing mindfulness-this helps us to create personal and communal space for reflecting on the experiences of emotional emancipation.*

*When we practice mindfulness, we practice love and acceptance of ourselves. We may not feel ready to love and accept ourselves in this moment, but in time it gives us the opportunity to begin the process of developing our inner strength. When we pay attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, we may begin to develop resilience to life's daily stressors.*

*Let's all get as comfortable as possible. Put both feet on the floor, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing deeply and evenly. This process may feel silly if you haven't practiced this before, but with time, you will find the benefits of being still and focusing on your breathing.*

*(Give the group about 90 seconds to relax).*

There are two emancipation phrases that we will use during the mindfulness activity. “May I awaken to my power” and “I recognize that my power is boundless.” This activity will bring us full circle from the first day we practiced mindfulness in this group. As we sit here on the last day, I want you to consider how this has changed since the first time we practiced our breathing exercises. What do these two statements mean to you now after being a part of this group for so long?

Pay close attention to your breathing, notice your breath in and then notice your breath out. Keep noticing your breathing, just as it is, in this moment. You don't need to change your breathing in any way, just notice your breathing as it normally is. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe in and then again as you breathe out.

(Silence)

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Keep your mind open, notice that your mind is wandering and then return to notice your breath. Now, each time you breathe in, I want you to say to yourself, "May I awaken to my power." When you breathe out, say to yourself "I recognize that my power knows no bounds."

## Week 10 Foundational Readings for Facilitator

**Fisher, C. B., Wallace, S. A., & Fenton, R. E. (2000).** Discrimination distress during adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* , 29, 679\*695.

**Good, T., & Nickols, S. (2001).** Expectancy effects in the classroom: A special focus on improving the reading performance of minority students in first-grade classrooms. *Educational Psychologist* , 36, 113-126.

## Appendix-Group Handouts

## Quotes for Week 1

“Identity is a prison you can never escape, but the way to redeem your past is not to run from it, but to try to understand it and use it as a foundation to grow.” **-Jay Z**

“Most people write me off when they see me.  
They do not know my story.  
They say I am just an African.  
They judge me before they get to know me.  
What they do not know is  
The pride I have in the blood that runs through my veins;  
The pride I have in my rich culture and the history of my people;  
The pride I have in my strong family ties and the deep connection to my community;  
The pride I have in the African music, African art, and African dance;  
The pride I have in my name and the meaning behind it.  
Just as my name has meaning, I too will live my life with meaning.  
So you think I am nothing?  
Don’t worry about what I am now,  
For what I will be, I am gradually becoming.  
I will raise my head high wherever I go  
Because of my African pride,  
And nobody will take that away from me.” **-Idowu Koyenikan**

“You can't be hesitant about who you are.” **-Viola Davis**

“The message I'm sending to myself - I can't change the world until I change myself first.” **-Kendrick Lamar**

“My presence speaks volumes before I say a word.” **-Mos Def**

## Quotes for Week 2

"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate."

**-Oprah Winfrey**

"I create my own calm and I keep my balance, because I know that it's not really me, by myself... The Creator always gives me the energy." **-Erykah Badu**

*"We need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own 'to do' list."*

**-Michelle Obama**

"Best advice that I ever got is to do whatever it takes to make myself happy, so that I'll be able to make others happy. If I'm not happy, I can't make other people happy." -

**Flavor Flav**

## Quotes for Week 3

"When you stand with the blessings of your mother and God, it matters not who stands against you." **-Yoruba Proverb**

"God and nature first made us what we are, and then out of our creative genius we made ourselves what we want to be." Follow always that great law: Let the sky and God be out limit and eternity our measurement." - **Marcus Garvey**

"Mama exhorted her children at every opportunity to "jump at de sun." We might not land on the sun, but at least we'd get off the ground." **-Zora Neale Hurston**

"Don't pray when it rains if you don't pray when the sun shines." - **Satchel Paige**

"Don't think that because you haven't heard from me in a while that I went to sleep. I'm still here, like a spirit roaming the night. Thirsty, hungry, seldom stopping to rest." **-Spike Lee**

"Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase." **-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

"Only by God's grace have I made it to see today and only by God's grace will I ever see tomorrow." **-Jesse Owens**

## Quotes for Week 4

“Defining myself, as opposed to being defined by others, is one of the most difficult challenges I face.” **-Carol Moseley-Braun**

“Healing begins where the wound was made.” **-Alice Walker**

“I don’t want anyone putting any limits on me.” **-Viola Davis**

“There is no such thing as ugly.” **-Zendaya**

“Sometimes I feel discriminated against, but it merely astonishes me. How can anyone deny themselves the pleasure of my company?” **-Zora Neale Hurston**



## Quotes for Week 7

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out. Only love can do that.” – **Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”  
-**Desmond Tutu**

“I’m a reflection of the community.” -**Tupac Shakur**

## Quotes for Week 8

"I freed a thousand slaves, I would have freed more if they knew they were slaves." -Harriet Tubman

"The idea that peace and love toward humanity should be nationalistic or denominational. It should be a chief concern for all mankind." -**Mos Def**

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here earth." -**Muhammed Ali**

"We just assume this is an inevitable part of American life, instead of the outrage that it is." -President Barack Obama.

"Nobody is free until everybody is free." -**Fannie Lou Hamer**

*"Find people who will make you better."* -**Michelle Obama**

"Anytime you see a turtle up on top of a fence post, you know he had some help." -**Alex Haley**

"I need to be surrounded by people as passionate and as dedicated as I am." -**Lauryn Hill**

"In times of crisis, the wise build bridges, while the foolish build barriers. We must find a way to look after one another as if we were one single tribe." -**Black Panther**

## Quotes for Week 9:

“A new world order is in the making, and it is up to us to prepare ourselves that we may take our rightful place in it.” – **Malcolm X**

“The fact that I am Black...means that I must undertake to love myself and respect myself as though my very life depends on love and respect.” – **June Jordan**

“That's how we do it in the black community; we give back to the people who made us who we are. We never forget that.” – **Snoop Dogg**

“Success isn’t about how much money you make, it’s about the difference you make in people’s lives.” – **Michelle Obama**

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” – **Jimi Hendrix**

## Week 10-Letter to Self

Dear Me:

# R.E.A.C.H. Youth Group Evaluation Form

R.E.A.C.H. Youth Community: \_\_\_\_\_ Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

**I.** *Please take a few moments to reflect on the activities in this group. What have you learned about yourself and your community while in this group?*

**II.** *What are your personal R.E.A.C.H. Youth goals?*

Was this group relevant to your personal goals? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

**III.** *What are your R.E.A.C.H. Goals for your community?*

Was the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group relevant to those community goals? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What were the most successful parts of the groups? [*For example: Powerful or Enjoyable experiences*]

What else would you have liked to discuss?

Any other comments? [*Include additional comments to help us improve the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group. Recommendations for future activities.*]

*Feel free to use the back of this page if additional space for any item is needed.*

# R.E.A.C.H. Youth Parent Permission Form

**Dear parent,**

We would like to extend the opportunity for your young man to participate in a small group called Reclaiming Empowerment Advocacy and Collecting Healing, Youth. This group is specially designed for young men of color to explore identity and improve self-esteem. The creation of these groups provides a space where young Black men can develop a community of like-minded and culturally similar peers where they can share concerns, fears, and joys. In addition, conversations will allow youth to have a collective space to participate in conversations related to the implicit and explicit misperception of Black inferiority.

These groups help to support the social and emotional development of students, which has a positive influence on academic development and success. As the parent, you can always feel free to contact the facilitators to discuss your young man and his growth in the group. However, because this small group is based on a trusting and collaborative relationship between the facilitator and the other young men, the leader will keep the information shared by the members confidential unless school district policy and/or ethical responsibilities require disclosure. These circumstances are if a child reveals information about harming themselves or others, or if a child reveals information about child abuse. In these rare cases only relevant information will be shared following the appropriate regulations in working with minors.

**Completed permission forms are due by \_\_\_\_\_.**

+++++

**\*\*\*\*\*Please detach and return lower portion of the page to \_\_\_\_\_. \*\*\*\*\***

My son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ *has my permission to participate* in the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group

Parent's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## R.E.A.C.H. Youth STUDENT Permission Form

**Dear young man,**

We would like to extend the opportunity for to participate in a small group called Reclaiming Empowerment Advocacy and Collecting Healing, Youth. This group is specially designed for young men of color to explore identity and improve self-esteem. The creation of these groups provides a space where young Black men can develop a community of like-minded and culturally similar peers where you can share concerns, fears, and joys. In addition, conversations will allow you to have a collective space to participate in conversations related to the implicit and explicit misperception of Black inferiority.

These groups help to support the social and emotional development of students, which has a positive influence on academic development and success. As a participant, you can always feel free to talk to the facilitators to discuss topics and concerns that you have in the group. In addition, because this small group is based on a trusting and collaborative relationship between the facilitator and the other young men, the leader will keep the information shared by the members confidential unless school district policy and/or ethical responsibilities require disclosure. These circumstances are if you or someone else reveals information about harming themselves or others, or if you or other participants reveal information about child abuse. In these rare cases only relevant information will be shared following the appropriate regulations in working with minors.

**Completed permission forms are due by \_\_\_\_\_.**

+++++

**\*\*\*\*\*Please detach and return lower portion of the page to \_\_\_\_\_.\*\*\*\*\***

I, \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ am *willing to actively participate* in the R.E.A.C.H. Youth group discussions and activities each week.

Student's Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Email: \_\_\_\_\_ phone number: \_\_\_\_\_